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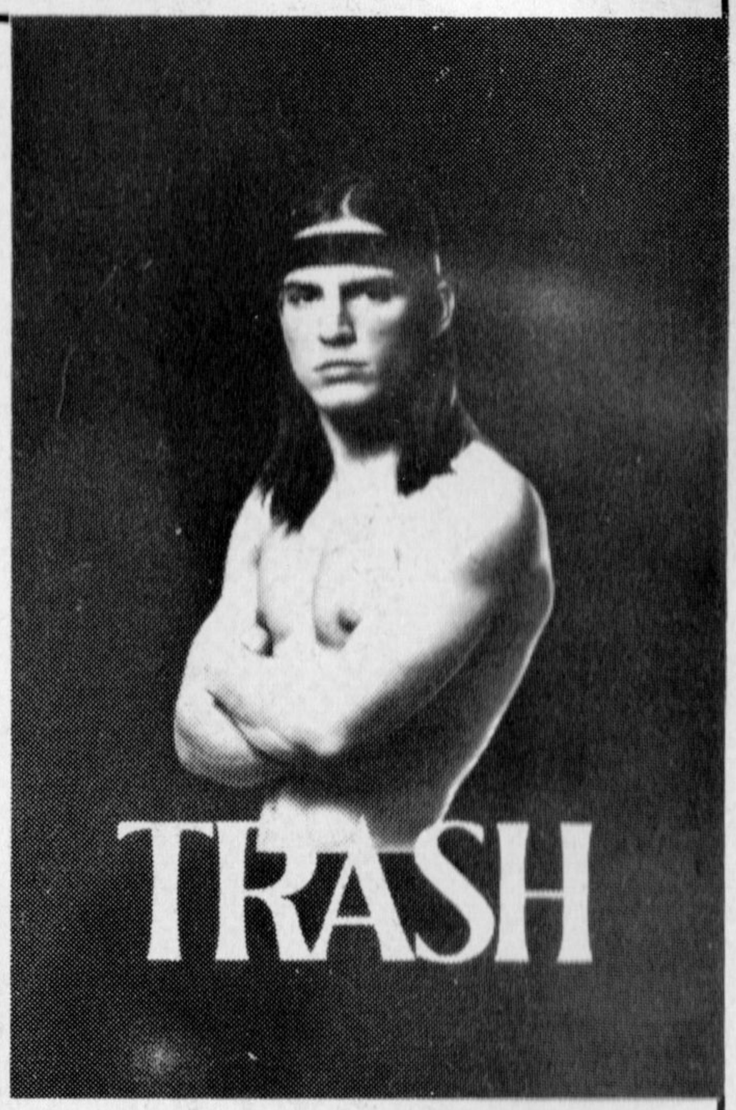

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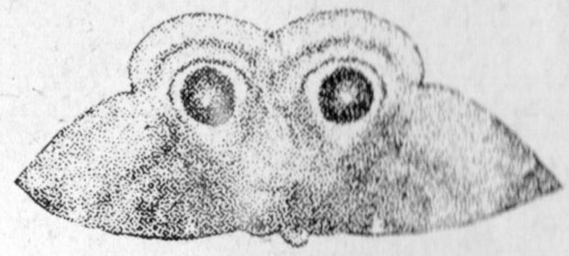

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

Zorn's Lemma

I'd like to add something to Bob Cowan's description of **Zorn's Lemma** (Vol. 2, No. 8). The images that progressively interrupt the word-images of the central section of the film do so with perfect regularity. Once a particular letter of the alphabet has been replaced by an image, that image (or action) recurs at the same point each time through the alphabet. Finally there is a clear run of 24 images (not 26: I and J count as one, and so do U and V), and the central section is over. The number of alphabet-runs each letter lasts for before its words become an image seems to be proportional to the number of words beginning with that letter in the English language. (For English majors and other literary types the suspense is terrific.) Filmmaker Hollis Frampton is delivering us from the symbolic language of words into a Youngblood film universe of non-symbolic, non-syntactic, concrete imagery, 24 frames per second and 24 seconds per cycle. Zorn, appropriately, turns out to be a turn-of-the-century painter (with a name beginning with Z he obviously wasn't destined to be a writer). Now will Frampton *please* tell us what Zorn's lemma is?

Tony Reif
Vancouver 9, B.C.

McCabe and Mrs. Miller

Although I couldn't agree more with Michael Goodwin's final assessment (Vol. 2 No. 12) of Robert Altman's **McCabe and Mrs. Miller** — a film that is both worthwhile and enjoyable — I absolutely resent his at times cretinous attempt to discuss the film's thematic importance. This kind of Oh-wow-fah-route nonsense does neither the film nor its director a service; for both, I think, need defending against the more conservative — and certainly more thoughtful! — reservations voiced by the likes of Stanley Kauffmann. Altman offends conventional taste with a vengeance, and is the master of the vulgar and the banal. But beneath the surface of vulgarity and banality, there *is* substance aplenty, and that substance may not be so illusive as Goodwin seems to think.

The reviewer's comments on the film's visual organization are pertinent, and what he suggests could just as easily be applied to the film's verbal structure. In **McCabe**, as in **MASH** and **Brewster**, Altman creates an aural montage that parallels the visual. The audience is forced to make choices, coerced, as it were, into a process of dual selection. The viewer will see what he chooses to see (signs, or flesh, or heavyhanded symbols, or whatever), and hear what he chooses to hear. If he is likely to be offended by a vulgar joke upon which his attention may focus, he is also likely to miss dialogue in proximity to that joke that *may* prove important. The demands Altman makes on his audience are complex and deceptive when measured against the apparently banal surface of his work.

The differences between the characters of McCabe and Mrs. Miller are most certainly *at* "the center of the film's power." The contrast is at once archetypal and commonplace, between masculine assertiveness and idealism and feminine reticence and practicality. All of the characters in this film are ordinary people, and in this sense Altman presents a refreshingly authentic view of a frontier that had not quite vanished by 1902. The Presbyterian Church miners are randy and, some of them, greedy; but even McCabe's local competitor is appalled by the senseless violence of the intruding gunmen. (Here it is instructive to compare Altman's setting to the more consistently sinister atmosphere of the mining community in Peckinpah's **Ride the High Country**, made more conventionally nearly a decade ago.)

And what of McCabe, the "hero"? He is both larger and smaller than life, a little more clever than the dingbats he finds in town, but not much. The partnership with Mrs. Miller brings out the best in him, makes him better than he in fact is. But he is so naive and vulnerable as to fall in love with Mrs. Miller (presuming, of course, that it is not merely his Ego that resents sweetening the kitty). She is too hardened, however, and too pragmatic to reciprocate. When her emotions begin to interfere with her business sense, she therefore retreats into an opium dream, where she remains, in catatonic happiness, while the wounded McCabe freezes to death.

The emblematic sign — FAIR GAMES OF CHANCE — is nothing if not ironic. The untypical shoot-out at the end is hardly a Fair Game, for McCabe is outnumbered. Nor does he play the game fairly, resorting understandably to ambush and deception to even the odds. And he wins the game, but the crowning irony is that the person he wins it for will never know. Mrs. Miller is a cynical-liberated-bitch-freak-copout. McCabe dies for his Beliefs — and that's no "bullshit." He is an idealist beaten down by the "real" world, which he succumbs to in much the same way as does the allegorical Brewster McCloud.

At least so it seems to me. And these ideas, I submit, are more centrally relevant to the film than the way the cinematography may make one "feel," or whether nor not Beatty/Christie remind one of Bogart/Bacall.

James M. Welsh
Salisbury State College
Salisbury, Maryland 21853

Mr. Welsh: I "absolutely resent" phrases (and concepts) like "masculine assertiveness and idealism and feminine reticence and practicality," not to mention "cynical-liberated-bitch-freak-copout." I hope none of your women acquaintances read your letter; they might get surprisingly assertive! As to the relevance of the cinematography, may I remind you that McCabe *is a film, not an essay? Anyway, I didn't really understand your letter very well.* — MG

More Nuclear Films

If you're still looking for titles and directors of Nuclear Films (Vol. 2 No. 6 *et seq.*), I can give you this: **Captive Women** (British title: **3000 A.D.**); Director: Stuart Gilmore; Producer/Distributor: RKO.

Jan Reinholds
Lerum, Sweden

Huston's WWII documentaries

In response to David Batterson's letter (Vol. 3 No. 1) which discussed John Huston's war documentary **Let There Be Light** (1946), this unusual film is extant within Canada, although it has very rarely been seen here. One of three documentaries made by Huston during the Second World War (the other two are the sorely mutilated **Battle of San Pietro** (1944), and the beautiful color film **Report from the Aleutians** (1943) which gives a devastating account of a bombing raid upon a Japanese base), **Let There Be Light** has perhaps gained a fantastic reputation from never having seen the light of day as far as most film scholars are concerned. For its time, twenty-five years ago, it is a remarkable document detailing with great sobriety the psychotherapeutic methods — which included hypnotism and psychoanalysis — used in the salvaging of soldiers whose psyches had given way under the stress of battle. From today's perspective the film appears to be naive (though indisputably well-made and sincere), since movies have advanced greatly in their candid depiction of psychiatry. Huston is himself by no means a pacifist, although his politics have often motivated his career, and he brings to the subject of **Let There Be Light** a balanced curiosity and a wary humanity which is found in the best of his feature films. In a sense he returned to the basic theme of **Let There Be Light** with his masterly **Reflections In a Golden Eye** (1968) wherein the sexual abnormalities of a military encampment are examined with minute care and remarkable objectivity. It's a great pity that the original version of Huston's **Battle of San Pietro** was ruined, for a combination of the awesome footage of front-line conflict which Huston caught there so vividly, and the post-hoc resurrection which the director studies in **Let There Be Light** would make a magnificent anti-war documentary. Huston did rediscover some of the power of these films in a brief sequence of his **A Walk With Love and Death** (1969), where the protagonist, played by Assaf Dayan, swept by the fervor of a minor engagement between the peasants and the knights, abruptly kills a young boy and is overtaken by a flood of remorse and self-disgust. Huston has plans to make a new film of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin, entitled **Agony at Easter** and his unusual awareness of the psychology of warfare may finally flourish untrammelled in this movie.

Alex Grant
Ottawa, Ontario

Unsolicited testimonials

I agree with your editors that it's about time you got your shit together to make TAKE ONE a better magazine. However, I can't imagine how you could improve your excellent publication. (That's a compliment.) So would you kindly enter my subscription to TAKE ONE. I am a Cinema Arts student at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A., and I find your magazine both entertaining (better than *Playboy*) and informative.

Michael S. Swalm
San Antonio, Texas

We found your October 4th issue very readable, honest and reflecting high standards of approach to films.

As a matter of record, we would have enjoyed it as much even if we didn't happen to be Mike's mother and dad.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Goodwin
Bronx, N.Y. 10458

NEXT ISSUE:

A Michael Snow interview and three (count 'em) reviews of **A Clockwork Orange** — among other things.

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NEWS

Austin Lamont tells us that he has started gathering information for **The Film Students' Handbook**, a reference book designed especially for film students. Present students and recent graduates are invited to submit information on their film schools, their experiences with film distributors or film festivals, and how they obtained a salaried job or production contracts. The Handbook is to be published by Signet once it is completed, and is intended to serve as a practical guide as to what happens both before and after you make your first film. More information can be had from: Sayre Maxfield, 26 Waverly Street (Suite 105), Boston, Mass. 02135 (tel: 617-782-3325).

And Herman G. Weinberg has written to say that the lake referred to in his review of **Claire's Knee** (Vol. 3, No. 1) is *not* a Swiss lake, as stated, but rather the lake at Annecy in France. Just to have everything on the up-and-up.

According to reliable sources (and you know what *that* means), the AFI cannot, and will not, release Peter Bogdanovich's film, **Directed By John Ford** — even for non-theatrical showings. It seems someone forgot to arrange for clearance on the numerous film clips from Ford's features. If the AFI, or anyone else for that matter, would care to comment on this our pages are open.

There's A Lesson Here Somewhere Dept.: Michael Webb, of AFI, asked a number of big-time Washington politicos to name their favourite films for a projected series of screenings at the AFI Theater in Washington, D.C. The results? Henry Kissinger: **Grand Illusion**; Spiro Agnew: **The Sound of Music** (also chosen by Edmund Muskie), **Mutiny On the Bounty**, and **Gunga Din**; Muskie: **Dr. Zhivago** and **Gone With the Wind** (in addition to **Music**); Ethel Kennedy: **The Nun's Story**; Arthur Schlesinger: **Trouble in Paradise**; James Buckley: **High Noon**; Art Buchwald: **Knute Rockne**; Bella Abzug: **Bus Stop**; McGovern: **Viva Zapata**; Jack Valenti: **A Man For All Seasons**, **Wilson**, and **My Darling Clementine** (a possible film freak here?); Topper Carew (director of the New Thing Art and Architecture Center): **Battle of Algiers**, and we wonder how long he'll have *his* job. No replies were received from Nixon, Hoover, Humphrey, Goldwater, Fulbright or Martha Mitchell.

Women for Equality in Media (WFEM), a national organization whose purpose is to fight discrimination against women in the media, has since January 1971 been waging war against the American Film Institute in Beverly Hills. After months of negotiations with the AFI over a proposed Center for Women in Film, in August 1971 WFEM filed a lawsuit against the AFI claiming overt sexual discrimination against women. Information about WFEM can be obtained from Deanna Kuhn, 840 Keniston Ave., Los Angeles.

The **Women's History Research Center** has just been opened in Berkeley, in conjunction with the New Haven Women's Film Cooperative, to collect Women's Liberation film reviews by women for research and possible publication. They've already put out an embryonic listing of films and reviews. 2325 Oak St., Berkeley, Cal. 94708.

Watch for *Women in Film no. 1*, a **new magazine** from California. 2802 Arizona Ave., Santa Monica 90404. Price 75c.

Film Library Quarterly is devoting their **winter issue** to films by women. You can see we're on the march!

The Canadian Film Institute announces the publication of *Canadian Women Film-Makers: An Interim Filmography.* Compiled this year by Alison Reid, the 20-page pamphlet is a basic resource document on the work of some 70 Canadian **women film directors and TV producers.** Write the CFI at: 1762 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario. (The CFI likewise has copies of its *Guide to Film Courses in Canada* for sale. Considerably improved over last year's edition, this pamphlet lists 71 institutions across the country.)

FESTIVALS & COMPETITIONS

March 4 through 10 will see the first National and International **Festival of Short Films** held at Grenoble France. Any film shorter than 58 minutes that was finished after the beginning of 1970 may be entered. Further information can be had by writing the Festival at: Maison de Grenoble et du Dauphine, 85 rue du Cherche-Midi, 75 Paris 6ème, France.

Entries in the U.S. **Industrial Film Festival** are now being accepted and should reach Festival headquarters before March 1. Twenty-nine categories of subject matter are available to entrants. Write: Suite 825, 39 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60603.

The American Federation of Film Societies has initiated a new program of awards for **student film criticism.** First prize is $100 (there are optional second and third prizes too), plus publication in *Film Society Review*. Contact AFFS, 144 Bleecker Street, New York 10012.

A **Film Arts Festival** is to be held in Jacksonville, Florida April 8 through 16, with prizes totalling $1,000 to go to the winning films (which must be in 16mm, must have been completed since January 1971, and should preferably be less than 20 minutes long). Further information from: Jacksonville Film Arts Festival, Jacksonville University, College of Fine Arts, Jacksonville, Fla. 32211.

An **International Festival of Women's Films** will be held in New York City in February 1972. It will run for two weeks with about 28 different film programs, discussions and panels on topics of professional interest and the image of women in film. A printed program with articles on "Women in the Early Days of Cinema" and American and European Women Filmmakers is also being produced. Sponsors include Simone de Beauvoir, Judith Crist, Jane Fonda, Barbara Loden, Eleanor Perry, and others. For information write to Festival of Women's Films, 1582 York Ave., New York, New York 10028.

The **Baltimore Film Festival** 3 is to be held April 21 through 29 of this year. Independent 16mm films should be entered (there is a $3.00 entry fee) before March 1. Last year's cash awards totalled $1500. Contact: Harvey Alexander, Academic Center 209A, University of Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland 21201.

April 24 through 29th witnesses the 18th **International Festival of Short Films** at Oberhausen. Films (not exceeding 36 minutes running time) are accepted provided they have not previously been screened in West Germany. Entry forms should be returned before March 31 and can be obtained from the festival office at Schwartzstrasse 71, 42 Oberhausen 1, West Germany.

Movies on a Shoestring (The Rochester International Amateur Film Festival) is looking for films (that have not been made for theatrical or commercial entertainment) for its 14th annual show (to be held April 29). Closing date for submissions is March 18. Write: Movies on a Shoestring, P.O. Box 7604, Rochester, NY. 14622.

The first **Black Film Festival** will be held during the week of April 17-23 at the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts, organized by Bay Area Filmmaker Arthur Sheridan. To guarantee the exposure of new black artists, he is seeking 35mm and 16mm works from the United States, Africa, and Latin America. Inquiries should be made to: Black Film Festival, c/o Arthur Sheridan, 2401 Jackson Street, San Francisco, California 94901.

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NOTES ON WOMEN DIRECTORS

by J. Pyros

Maya Deren

A prefatory remark: the writer admits the following research-essay to be obviously incomplete; its purpose is to stimulate further thought and study on the subject of women directors. As should be readily apparent, except for an occasional tokenist, women are virtually denied any access to careers as film directors for the same reasons that they are discouraged from becoming doctors, lawyers, jockeys, and baseball umpires. Significantly, there is another and more tragic reason for not allowing women to direct films. Millions of people are exposed to films, so no area is more useful for disseminating positive or negative images of women. And if men, victims of their own delusions, cannot help but be biased, and women, victims of male oppression, are not given the opportunity to express themselves, whence shall liberating films come? Herein lies one of the problems posed by this article.

At one time, although even this practice stopped as early as 1914, a few films were made with "Women's Suffrage" themes. Not that they were necessarily sympathetic to women, but at least they acknowledged the existence of conflict. Eleven such films are listed in the Film Index. **For the Cause of a Suffrage** (France, 1909), directed by George Méliès, is one of the films more favourable to the women's cause. The plot concerns a husband who poses as a woman in order to infiltrate a suffrage meeting. He is discovered and tossed into the river. In **A Militant Suffragette** (Germany, 1914), a suffragette agrees to marry the man of her father's choosing when she learns that the man she loves is the anti-feminist whose home she had planned to bomb. And in **Oh! You Suffragette** (USA, 1911), mice "send the women scurrying home."

The interesting thing to note is that even though these films broach themes generally favourable to women, their conclusions support *male* attitudes. Since this is true in these cases, how much more do so-called 'neutral' films reflect male domination? Recalling that Huey P. Newton perceived power as the ability to define phenomena, it is important to observe ways in which men have defined women. Using Lawrence Reddick's method, from his seminal study of Blacks in Hollywood films (*Journal of Negro Education*, 1944), one might research the following patterns of roles of women in films:

apple-pie mom
bitch/shrew/shrike
sex goddess
lesbian feminist
Aunt Thomasina
style-monster/clothes horse
'cheap' slut/tramp/broad/pig
matronly martyr
penis envious
prima donna
proud war-widow
sorority sweetheart
Andy Hardy-maiden aunt
maid/waitress/hatcheck 'girl'
voracious vagina
cold-fish career woman
Miss All-American Super Patriot
dutiful 'Gal Friday'
instant homemaker/coffee brewer
proud-of-meniality wife

To return to the issue at hand, women as film directors, it is interesting to note that from the beginning of filmmaking to the present, whereas there have been thousands of male directors, the number of women directors (specifically of commercial, full-length, major distribution films) comes to the grand total of about fifty. Some of these directors are:

Dorothy Arzner (1900-) who became one of the best known and most successful of all women directors. She began her career at Paramount Studios as a stenographer, advancing then to film cutter for James Cruze, and later to scriptwriter. Finally in 1927 she directed her first of many films, **Fashions for Women**. In a world in which at least 50 percent of the population is female, she was Hollywood's only woman director in the thirties. Her list of more than ten films includes: **Craig's Wife**, 1935; **The Bride Wore Red**, 1937; and **Dance Girl, Dance**, 1940. The last entry one finds on Arzner is that during World War II she directed training films for the WACS.

Shirley Clarke (1927-) studied dancing with Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey, and Anna Sokolow, and this interest led to her first films, **Dance in the Sun** (1953), **Bullfight** (1955), **Moment in Love** (1959), and **Bridges-Go-Round** (1958). Each of these films was well received critically. To George Amberg, **Bullfight,** performed by Anna Sokolow, reflected through dance "a spectator's feelings at a

---

J. Pyros edits Dramatika, *and works at Cumberland County College, New Jersey.*

corrida with an assurance of style [that] carried a fine poetic feeling translating sheer violence into meaning, events into symbols." Clarke's earlier films also included **In Paris Parks** (1954) which captured a day in the life of children at their spontaneous play; **Brussels Loops** (1958, 12 films, each two and one half min.), "destroyed by the United States State Department"; **Skyscraper** (1959); and **A Scary Time** (1960) commissioned and distributed by UNICEF. Experimenting with multi-screening techniques for Expo '67, Clarke made **Man in the Polar Regions**, a continuously projected "eleven-screen carousel theatre".

Clarke filmed her first full-length work, **The Connection**, in 1960. Largely a direct screening of the Living Theatre's production of Jack Gelber's play on drug addiction, the film caused critic Paul Beckley to commend Clarke as "a promising new director". Her second feature film, **The Cool World** (1963), based on Warren Miller's novel, which was later produced as a play, was in the cinéma vérité style. The film, with a bitter yet beautiful delineation of racial injustice, depicted young blacks living lives of anger and frustration in their ghetto world. Clarke's next full-length film was the lesser known WGHB-TV (Boston) commissioned project, **Robert Frost, A Love Letter to the World** (1964) which received an Academy Award in the documentary division.

To date, Clarke's latest feature length film, also in the cinéma vérité genre, is **Portrait of Jason** (1967). As Kevin Thomas noted, "the premise of this film couldn't be more simple yet the results could scarcely be more remarkable! New York filmmaker Shirley Clarke took her camera, placed it in front of a man . . . and shot away for the next twelve hours . . . But Jason Holliday is no ordinary man. He is 1) Negro, 2) a homosexual. Jason strips his soul bare . . . as a result, the film is both honest and compassionate."

Clarke's awards for cinematic excellence include the Special Citation for **Moment in Love** by the Creative Film Foundation, First Prize at the Venice Film Festival for **Skyscraper**, a Flaherty Award, an Award of Special Merit at the Edinburgh Film Festival, and an Academy Award Nomination.

Germaine Dulac (1882-1924) of France was influenced by Louis Delluc who, according to Arthur Knight, was "the one man responsible for the resuscitation of the French film after World War I." Delluc brought together a small but significant group of cinéastes — Abel Gance, Jean Epstein, Marcel L'Herbier and Germaine Dulac — who came to share his view that film should be truly French and truly cinematic. These films were impressionistic in technique, intimate in form, somewhat literary in flavour and were rather highly romanticized studies of French low life. During this period, Dulac's first films were **Les Soeurs ennemies** (1915), **Ames de fous** (1918) and **La Fête Espagnole** (1920). In 1923 she made **La Souriante Madame Beudet,** an impressionistic treatment of an unhappy wife and her morose husband. Shimmering soft-focus photography contrasts the wife's romantic fantasies with the fast-moving distorted camera visions of the husband in his oppressive boorishness. Sheldon Renan mentions the film's techniques of soft-focus, superimposition and unusual camera angles as further evidence of Dulac's allegiance to avant-garde techniques. (It is interesting to note in passing that novelist Henry Miller listed this film as among the most memorable and remarkable he'd seen.)

Dulac's film career was unusual in that it began with commercial works, moved on to the underground cinema, and concluded with her making newsreels. During the mid-period as an avant-gardist she filmed **Disque 957** and **Thème et variations** (1930) which are described as abstract poems of forms set to music.

Because the scenario was written by Antonin Artaud, Dulac's **La Coquille et le clergyman** (1926) has elicited a great deal of interest from cinema, literature, and theatre scholars. Georges Sadoul said that the film deserved "a place among the classics of the surrealistic film," and Alain Virmau noted that "historically speaking, **La Coquille et le clergyman** remains the first surrealist film." Artaud himself wrote, "In all fairness, the critics, if there are any left around, should recognize the inter-relationship of all these films (**Un Chien Andalou, L'Age d'or, The Blood of the Poet**) and say they all descend from **La Coquille et le clergyman,** but without the 'esprit' of **La Coquille**, which they all failed to recapture." Arthur Knight, however, felt that the film was merely derivative of surrealism.

During her later career in newsreel filming and in her personal attitudes, Dulac was an active feminist who, among other activities, co-published *La Fronde*, a feminist publication of the time.

Ida Lupino (1918-), the daughter of English comedian Stanley Lupino, began her career as an actress on the English stage in 1932 in *Her First Affair*. In 1934 she emigrated to the U.S. and acted in such Hollywood films as **High Sierra** and **The Man I Love**. Beginning with **Outrage** in 1950 she became one of Hollywood's token women directors. Over the next fifteen years Lupino directed **Never Fear** (1950), **Hard Fast and Beautiful** (1951), **The Bigamist** (1952), **The Hitchhiker** (1953), **On Dangerous Ground**, **Beware My Lovely,** and **The Trouble With Angels** (1966). Lupino recently announced she would return to acting.

Leni Riefenstahl (1902-) became a director of great notoriety because her films favourably propagandized the Hitler-Fascist movement in Germany in the Thirties. Riefenstahl had been an actress-filmmaker for some years when Hitler commissioned her to film the Sixth Nazi Congress in Nuremberg. The film, **Triumph of the Will**, is frequently considered the most powerful propaganda film ever made. Kracauer noted that though the film undoubtedly recorded the Reich's party convention, the convention itself had also been staged to produce **Triumph of the Will**! Her other films are the renowned 1936 documentary, **Olympic Games**, and **Tiefland** (which was started in 1934 but not completed and released until 1955; Riefenstahl was ill, and directed the final parts from a stretcher). In 1938 Riefenstahl made a film about Hitler's mountain retreat, **Berchetesgarten uber Selzburg**. Due to her earlier sympathies Riefenstahl's directing career essentially ended with the demise of the German Third Reich at the end of World War II.

Agnès Varda (1928-) directed her first film **La Pointe courte,** in 1956. Varda's short films included **Opéra-Mouffe**, which *Sight and Sound* called "a film equivalent of a Cartier-Bresson album," and **Black Panther, A Report**. Her full length films include: **Cléo de 5 à 7** (1961), **Le Bonheur** (1964), and **Les Créatures** (1966). In 1967 Varda, with Resnais, Lelouch, and Godard, directed a segment of the anti-war **Loin de Vietnam**, and in 1969 she directed **Lion's Love** in Hollywood, starring Viva, Gerome Ragni, James Rado, and filmmaker Shirley Clarke.

Lois Weber (1882-1939) was an early American feminist whom Lewis Jacobs describes as "notable in the 1910s for her films advocating birth control, **Hypocrites, Where Are My Children,** and **Idle Wives**." *Overland* magazine (1916) noted that Weber was "the highest salaried woman director in the world," and stressed her ability to handle controversial subjects. Occasionally acting and/or writing the scenario, Weber also directed (or co-directed with her husband, Phillips Smalley) **The Jew's Christian** (1913), and **The Merchant of Venice** (1914). **The Marriage Clause** (1926) and **The Sensation Seekers** (1926) are her most celebrated films.

Mai Zetterling (1925-) worked as an actress from 1941 in Sweden and later in England. In 1962 she directed her first film, **War Games**. This was followed by **Loving Couples** (1964), about which Zetterling said that she had attempted to suggest that "marriage was like falling asleep for the rest of your life." In **Loving Couples** as well as her subsequent films, **Night Games** (1966), **Dr. Glas** (1967), and **The Girls** (1967), Zetterling constantly reiterated her belief that "a woman is emotionally formed by men and never quite breaks free of them even if she would like to . . ."

Olga Preobrazhenskaya (1885-) and **Esther Schub** (1894-1959) worked in Russia at the time Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko. Preobrazhenskaya made **The Village of Sin** (1927), **The Peasant Women of Riazam** (1928), and **The Last Attraction** (1929). Schub's films include **The Fall of the Romans** (1927) and **The Great White Way** (1927). Both Paul Rotha and Arthur Knight considered them to be among the most important directors working in Russia.

The above list is only partial, of course. I have tried to give a sampling of both well-known, and of historically important but now obscure, women directors. In the past few years, more women have been able to break into the feature film industry, in Europe, America, and Canada.

Though the commercial avenues of film directing have been in the main closed to women — we can see some change in this situation in the last few years — they have fared much better in the realms of the avant garde, the experimental, the underground. The reasons for this include the fact that such projects are often self-financed, so that women don't have to convince anyone of their 'merits' before undertaking them. The following are some of the most important underground women filmmakers.

Mary Ellen Bute (1909-) began her film career working for documentary filmmaker Lewis Jacobs, and later co-directed with her husband Ted Nemeth **Rhythm in Light** (1936), **Synchrony No. 2** (1936), **Parabola** (1938), **Escape** (1940) and others. **Color Rhapsody** (1954) and **Mood Contrast** (1954) used oscilloscope-generated images and electronically created imagery. Parker Tyler describes Bute's early work as that of a "purist; a choreographer of light and colour, strictly, a little too strictly, obeying patterns of classical

music," using film as "colour abstraction . . . developed from painting." And to Arthur Knight, her films are "visual symphonies of commonplace objects — pins, buttons, collars — photographed through distorted lenses and animated to the music of the Dance Macabre or a Bach Toccata and Fugue."

Bute's most ambitious project, the full-length **Passages from Finnegan's Wake** (1965), incorporated sections from her earlier film, **The Boy Who Saw Through** (1956-8). At present she is making **The Skin of Our Teeth**, based on Thornton Wilder's play.

Storm de Hirsch filmed her first work, **Journey Around a Zero,** in 1963. In 1964, she made the full-length **Goodbye in the Mirror**, which Gregory Markopoulos classed with the "filmic scale of the grand experimentalist, Roberto Rosselini." De Hirsch next worked on a trilogy called **The Color of Ritual, The Color of Thought,** which included **Divinations** (1964), **Peyote Queen** (1965), and **Shaman, A Tapestry for Sorcerers** (1966). Next she filmed Jonas Mekas making his version of **The Brig,** in a film called **Newsreel: Jonas in the Brig**. In 1966 she made **Sing Lotus** and **Cayuga Run: Hudson River Diary, Book I.** Her latest work is **Third Eye Butterfly** (1968).

De Hirsch has received the American Film Institute's First Independent Film Grant (1968) for her work-in-progress **The Tattooed Man**, the Robert Nelson Award for **Cayuga Run**, and the Johannes Keppler Award for her trilogy. De Hirsch is also a poet, with several published books to her credit.

Maya Deren (1917-1967), sometimes called the "mother of Underground films," made her first film, **Meshes of the Afternoon** (1943), with music by her husband, composer Teiji Ito. **Meditations on Violence** was a poetic dance film choreographing movements and rhythms of the Wu-Tang and Saolin schools of Chinese boxing and transforming them into their cinematic equivalents. **Ritual in Transfigured Time** was described by Jesse Zunser as a "memorable, exquisitely poetic, heroically tragic picturization of the emotions linked to the intensity of a girl's frustrated search for companionship in the real and unreal world in which she lives." **A Study in Choreography for Cinema** was a classic experiment in film/dance, and **The Very Eye of Night** is "a celestial ballet filmed entirely in the negative."

In 1943, Deren worked with Surrealist painters Matta and Duchamp on **Witch's Candle**, a work never completed. Her intent was to adapt the Surrealist aesthetic into a film promoting open defiance of normal time and space relationships — a goal later achieved with distinction in **Meshes of the Afternoon**. Deren's philosophy of film emphasized "film poetry" rather than "film prose", which to her was analagous to a stage play and developed horizontally. Consequently, says Parker Tyler, "we see that there is [the] magical . . . built in the vertical dimensions of dream [to] become complicated metaphors . . . an ideogram, or word structured by an aggregate of images . . . literally . . . picture language".

Along with her films, Deren did much for the experimental film through her lectures on the new forms, and called for film as a personal expression and for the encouragement of a new breed of moviegoers. To promote these aims she organised the Creative Film Foundation.

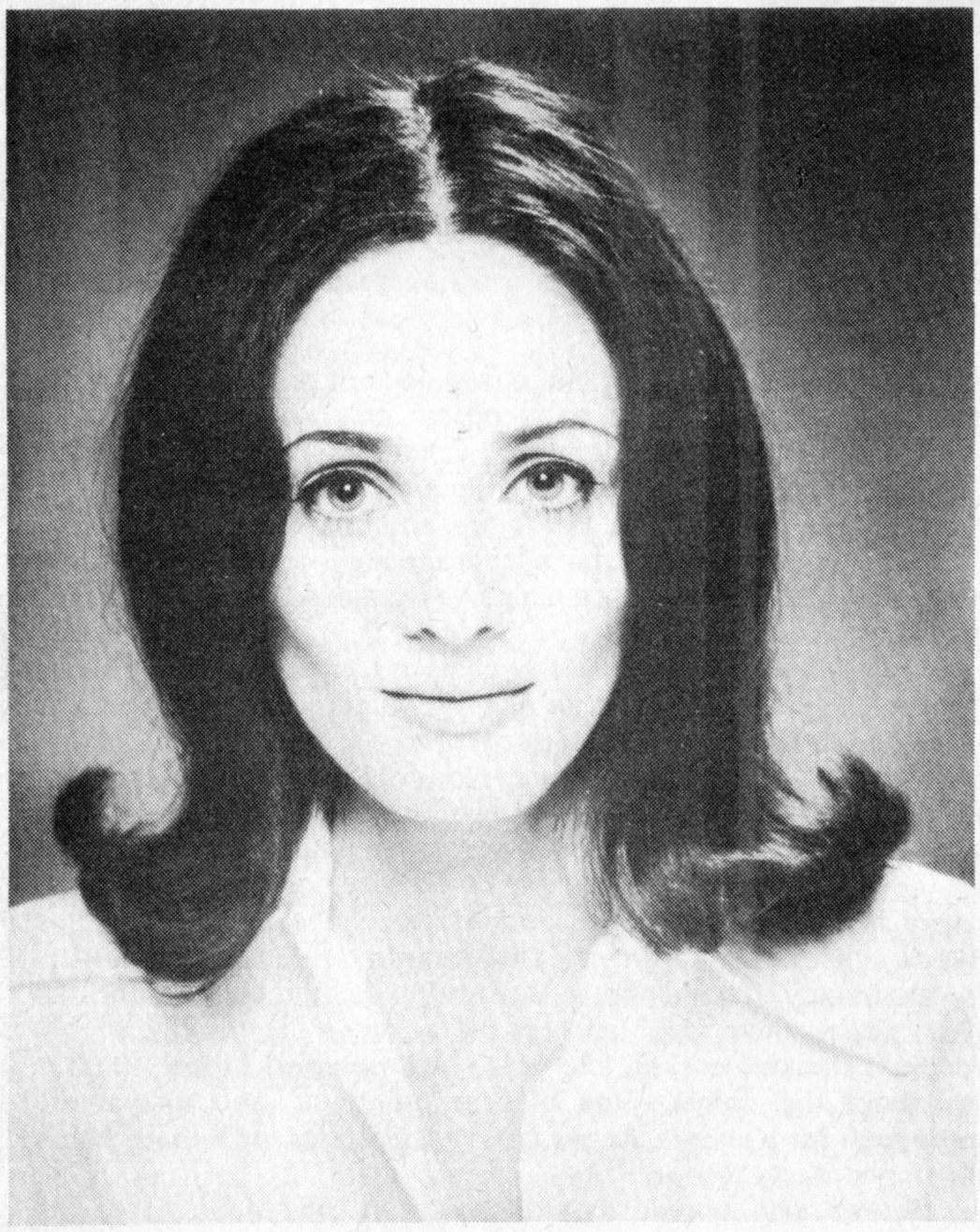
Marie Menken (1910-1970) became a filmmaker in 1945 when she was given a pawn ticket for a movie camera. Redeeming it, she made **Visual Variations on Noguchi**. The photography and editing had the effect of making Isamu Noguchi's sculptures "move" through the light. Menken waited twelve years before making her second film, **Glimpse of the Garden** (1957). **Hurry! Hurry!** (1957) was a microscopic investigation of human sperm cells lashing around in search of an egg, double-exposed over flames and a soundtrack of bombardment; **Dwightania** (1959) was a partly-animated study of paintings by Dwight Ripley; and **Mood Mondrian** (1963) was a filmic exploration of the painter's "Broadway Boogie Woogie". Menken worked four years on **Drips and Strips** (1965), a film about the composition of drip paintings, and also made **Arabesque for Kenneth Anger** (1961), **Bagatelle for Willard Maas** (1961), and **Andy Warhol** (1965), among others.

Menken also worked on all husband Willard Maas' films, and acted in Andy Warhol/Ron Tavel's **Juanita Castro**, Warhol's **Chelsea Girls** and **Prison**, Ledeberg's **Eargogh**, and briefly in Boultenhouse's **Dionysus.**

Again, this brief study has but scratched the surface, and we need still further investigation of the state — and status — of women directors. It might be valuable to paraphrase the suggestions made at Ferris State College (1969) for correcting the Black-American image in films, and consider their application to women. They recommend that filmmakers and producers: 1. Refocus their attention upon the present and future condition of women, 2. Enlist the advice of women to improve accuracy and authenticity, 3. Accept the challenge of presenting contemporary philosophies of women, 4. Discontinue the practice of depicting subservient women as representative of the total existence/purpose of women, 5. Employ more women in policy making/creative positions, 6. Depict the experience of women in ways other than through polarization of men and women, 7. Seriously employ women producers, directors, and technicians in the making of films about women.

For those interested in further study in this area, a bibliography of pertinent articles and books is available from this author, through *Take One*.

women ON WOMEN IN FILMS



Stephanie Rothman

Whenever a woman, involved in some other aspect of film-making, ventures to tell a man that she'd like to direct a picture the reaction goes something like this:

"My God, you'll lose your femininity! You'll turn into some kind of butch character! A director has to be a father-authority figure! Do you think all those guys on the crew are going to take orders from a woman? Besides, it's a tough job---you have to keep five hundred things in your mind at once. You have to concentrate and shut out everything else in your life---no appointments at the hair-dresser, no shopping, no dinner parties. What if you're not feeling exactly terrific a few days every month? What if something goes wrong? You can't solve it by bursting into tears, you know! Listen honey, come over to the set and watch for a while. I'd like to know what you think of the leading lady's hem-line. I mean are skirts going to be short or long when this flick gets released?"

Translation: (1) Femininity means clinging to his arm or better yet walking softly and ten paces behind. (2) His mother was either a jelly-fish or a tigress. Whatever she was, she wasn't warm, empathetic, intuitive, bright, nurturing and firm. (3) Running a set is like running a military camp or a bunch of football-playing jocks. (4) Talent, skill, intelligence have something to do with a preponderance of male hormones. (5) A woman is a toy doll with a head full of sawdust and a crying mechanism when pressed.

So that's what the brain-wash has been about all these years and since it is ludicrous, what is there now, but lack of will, to keep women from assuming any creative role whatsoever? Onward sisters!

IN FILM

Eleanor Perry

The object of this symposium was to offer a forum for women filmmakers to talk about their experiences. A questionnaire was sent to many women directors, producers, screen writers, editors, and critics. The majority of the responses came from women who seemed interested in the concerns of women in the profession and in society as a whole.

1. *How has your work in films been affected by the fact that you are a woman?*

Sylvia Spring. Everything I do is affected by the fact that I am a woman. I can only speak from my experience and thus I think it is natural that the lead role of my film was a woman and done completely from her point of view. When I made the film (or first conceived the idea) I was not into the 'liberation' movement and thus most of the issues about male/female relationships were done on a feeling level, from my own experience and quite unconsciously dealt with this complicated area that I am now aware of.

Sylvia Anderson: My work in films has very much been affected by the fact that I am a woman—to me it is quite unavoidable. I am more at home with human problems than technical ones although with the aid of a good director all subjects should be able to be tackled. Really good filmmakers should be able to embrace a variety of subjects so I suppose I could make—for example—a War Movie with a good 'gutsy' Director and technical back-up. But like all creative people I suppose I must lean towards certain subjects more than others.

2. *Have you experienced any special difficulties or benefits in making films that you feel are results of your sex?*

Sylvia Spring: The benefits I experienced were only those of the old sexual game-playing kind. I got noticed and singled out as a young WOMAN filmmaker and thus got a lot of media coverage that I probably wouldn't have got were I not a woman. In retrospect I think this attention did more harm than good both to my ego and to the success of the film.

The difficulties were of the usual sort . . . trying to get business

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I have been out of the studios and have just returned and found your letter regarding "Take One" - Women in Films issue. I apologise for the delay in answering and imagine the issue has now gone to press.

In any case, I would have had very little to say as I do not consider a woman film producer functions any differently from a male film producer, and I do not remember any occasion when my work has been judged differently from that of my male colleagues. The only subject matter I would never consider are those involving excessive violence, which I find more obscene than any sex subject could be.

Yours sincerely,

Betty E. Box

BETTY E. BOX

It's been 40 years since I worked in films. When I did I found my male bosses adorable. I don't like women very much. I don't like their films so I pass them up. Throughout my career, women have done me much more dirt than men; I just find them tiresome, if not vicious. So I don't think you'll find me any help for your project. Just the same, good luck!

Anita Loos

FURTHER COMMENTS Sylvia Anderson

Up until a few months ago I worked as Co-Producer with my husband on T.V. and Cinema films and was under exclusive contract to a major Company..... At the crucial age of 40 I decided I wanted to go it alone - professionally speaking - and 'Do my own thing'..... I was rather tired of doing it all the man's way and never really being able to express myself wholeheartedly ..... I sat down very much alone at my typewriter and wrote my first screenplay - that is without the former partnership of my husband..... Ego-wise it was the best thing I could have done and I was really elated when the final draft was complete and into production..... Then came the hard grind.... trying to get my own project off the ground and into production. After months of delightful lunches and dinners with T.V. executives and movie moguls - often with lots of propositions quite unrelated to work - I was right back where I started... out of work..... My husband by this time was smugly well installed on a new T.V. series and managing very nicely thank you without me (at least so he said!) and I had exhausted the round of 'eligible' would be Sylvia Anderson sponsors.... it seemed as a social hostess I was a wow - as the other half of Gerry Anderson great - as a writer acceptable but as a Film Producer in my own right - not a hope!.....

As a well known Hollywodd Movie Executive told me when I put forward certain views about how one of our films should be released 'You're too pretty to worry your head about that'... that is in 1971!..... Admitted the younger & more 'with it' movie makers are more enlightened when it comes to feminine infiltration - maybe they're not so scared as the older guys who are looking over their shoulders the whole time - waiting for that stab in the back and the arrival of their new successor.... In an endeavour to be fair I admit it is difficult for anyone to get an interesting and progrssive project off the ground whether it be in Cinema or T.V. but to go with an untried formula AND be a Woman is almost an impossibility - it's a stigma and getting past that initial charming encounter - the mild flirtation - the 'swinging lunch' is like getting behind the enemy lines..... However, I am glad to report that my 'bulldog' tenacity and 'Ballsy' determination looks as if it is at last paying off and when the breakthrough comes and I am joined by all the other ladies waiting in the wings then Big Male Boss - you better watch out because like all suppressed elements we're really gonna explode on to the scene!

2. Has being a woman affected your treatment of female characters in your films?

Yes. All the scripts of my films have been written in part by me. I have tried to avoid letting my female characters become what most women are still reared from childhood to become: the dependent appendages of men. My films are consciously trying to shape their own destinies. They have their own goals, which do not necessarily include men.

Sylvia Spring

men to take me seriously when it came to making deals, talking money and contracts. But I had absolutely no trouble with my cast or crew (that I am aware of) when it came to my sex.

Sylvia Anderson: I suppose being a fairly feminine and I hope attractive woman I do find difficulty in establishing the same relationship with a would-be Distributor or Financier as would my male counter-part. Once having got a project away, however, then it is comparatively easy to overcome any prejudice that might exist with crews. Usually, however, they respond very well to an intelligent and sincere approach and once they have been convinced that you know what you are doing they are with you all the way. The important thing to me is never to use a 'tough' approach just to counteract one's sex—just behave like a good technician and get on and do the job. I try not to appear bossy but rather to request co-operation and NEVER NEVER resort to tears or hysterics. At the moment I must admit it is difficult, unless you are a 'blue stocking' or—as my husband crudely comments — 'a Woman with Balls', to get the powers that be to take a Woman executive really seriously or indeed to appoint her at all.

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: It's a double-edged sword, finally out to pierce you.

Stephanie Rothman: I have not met any difficulties in the actual process of filmmaking that I can trace to my sex. What I did encounter when I first started out were dire warnings from men who were film executives, but not filmmakers, that I would never be allowed to direct, and that even if I were, male crews would never work for me. I have always thought this was a veiled way, or what they mistook for a veiled way, of telling me that they didn't want to see me progress.

3. *Have many of the reviews of your work mentioned or dealt with your films in terms of sex? If so, to what conclusions?*

Sylvia Spring: Women reviewers were generally more positive and sympathetic to what I was attempting to say and do since they could

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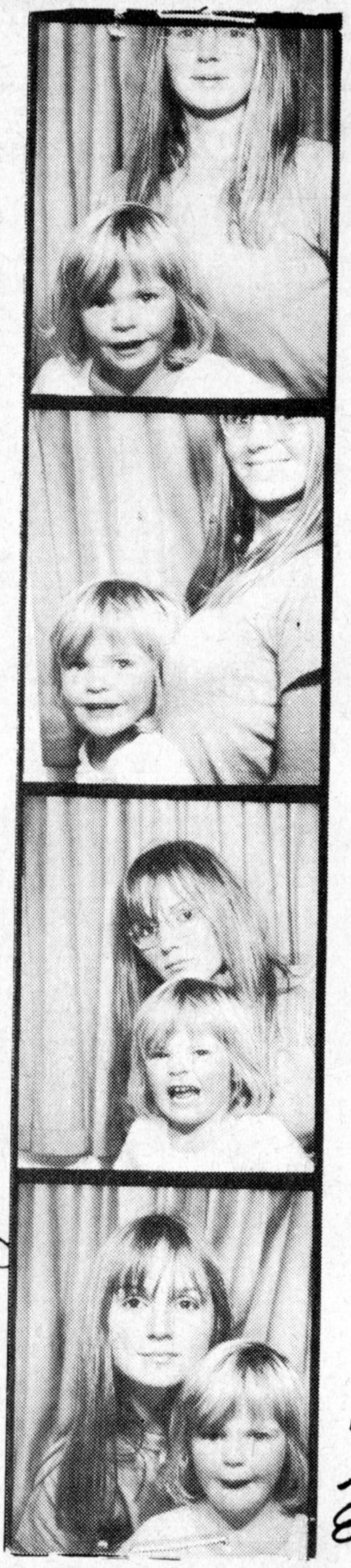
Judy Steed ● Emily Stead ●



I am not politically active. I dont seem to have a political bone in my body, I know men like this too, although sometimes when I hear Joyce Wieland I feel it is my responsibility to work for the revolution.
Privately the revolution has happened, not that its ever finished; its a miracle we survive every day.
So what if a reviewer deals with my films in terms of my sex? In terms of films, all I care about is making them and having good ideas and understanding more about what I want to do in film. The main hassle for everyone in this country is finding money to make films. My activity is the result of my energy and my desire. If I continue with films it is because for a million reasons I want to. If I stop it is because I want to stop.

POLANSKI: I *do* dominate them. And they like it! I know, I know, this is regarded today as a Neanderthal attitude. But I know one women's lib leader who, friends tell me, is a great cocksucker. By the way, what exactly is the women's lib position on fellatio? That it's OK, but only on an equal-time basis? And why do women sometimes use words like, "He's a *real* man"? It doesn't mean that he knits well or that he looks after the kids well. It has always meant a man ~~who is~~ more creative, more aggressive than a woman, because these are the qualities that have always been essential for the survival of our kind.

POLANSKI: Well, you must admit that most women one meets do not have the brain of Einstein. I have a very firm theory about male and female intelligence. ~~It~~ causes an absolute outrage if you say that women on the average are less intelligent than men, but it happens to be true. Since society is becoming more and more democratic about these

You must admit that most men one meets do not have the brain of Einstein.

4. The sex of the maker of a particular film should not, of course, enter into its judgement - but until such time as there are a more representative number of women involved this will obviously be a hook for critics to hang their venom on.

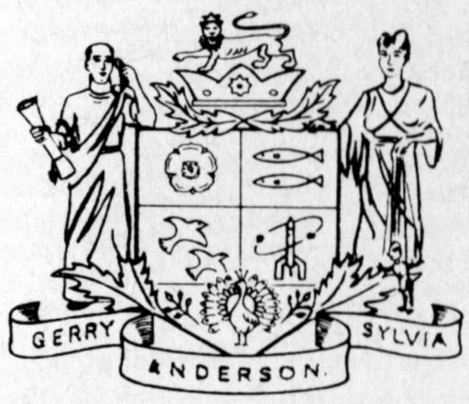
Sylvia Anderson

I think it is time for women who want to work in any aspect of the film or Tv media to get together, gather their collective strength, unite and confront the sacred cow of the male dominated media. We need to do it for ourselves first, to prove to ourselves that we can and to give us the collective strength to carry out our aims, and we need to do it because it is time...there is a need for women to speak to each other and about themselves instead of these patronizing glossy brush overs we have got from the media to date. Only by demanding our rights to equal representation and equal opportunity in the area of media can we ever hope to be treated fairly. I would like to hear from any women in Canada who are interested in working for this end.

Your sister,

Sylvia Spring

Sylvia Spring.



probably identify more readily to Madeleine's problems. Men reviewers didn't directly put me down for being a woman (they knew that was being uncool) but indirectly a number of them put down 'the self-discovery thing' as not worthy of their consideration with a kind of 'ho-hum' superior attitude as if knowing oneself was only worthy of consideration when that particular theme was 'IN' (the same kind of mentality as distributors who are only concerned with fads).

Sylvia Anderson: Again because of the rarity of women in key positions in films or TV, reviewers will be biased. One feels that the attitude of a male critic would be 'Not bad for a woman' or 'typical feminine sentimentality' . . . . Since most of my career in films has been in partnership with my husband I have not, personally, been subjected to this particular form of prejudice but I am quite prepared now that I am going it alone for this attitude.

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: Of course but not always and to obvious conclusions.

Stephanie Rothman: Almost no notice at all has been taken of my sex in reviews. I can only recall two occasions when it has even been mentioned, and each time it was only to mention that I was a rarity because of my sex.

In a way this pleases me. I naturally want my films to be judged on their own merits. But at the same time I feel that calling attention to the fact that I am a woman might suggest to other women that they too could become directors if they wished. It might make the possibility of accomplishing this seem a little less bleak. When I left film school eight years ago, I found the fact that at least one woman, Shirley Clarke, was actively working in a field otherwise monopolized by men, was a source of reassurance to me that I might be able to do it too.

4. *What works by women filmmakers have most influenced your own films, and in what ways?*

Sylvia Spring: I have not seen many films made by women and those

Mary Cathcart Borer,
9 November, 1971

My contribution to films has been only in the capacity of script-writer, first in documentary films and then in the Rank Organisation's Children's Film Department, where I was story editor and also contributed original stories as well as scripting adaptations.

In documentary scripting, which involves a great deal of research, it is quite irrelevant whether one is a man or woman. One has to rely largely on one's own initiative and until the job is finished and the script handed over to the producer and director, one has little to do with the rest of the film unit, amongst whom friendly collaboration and understanding are so vital.

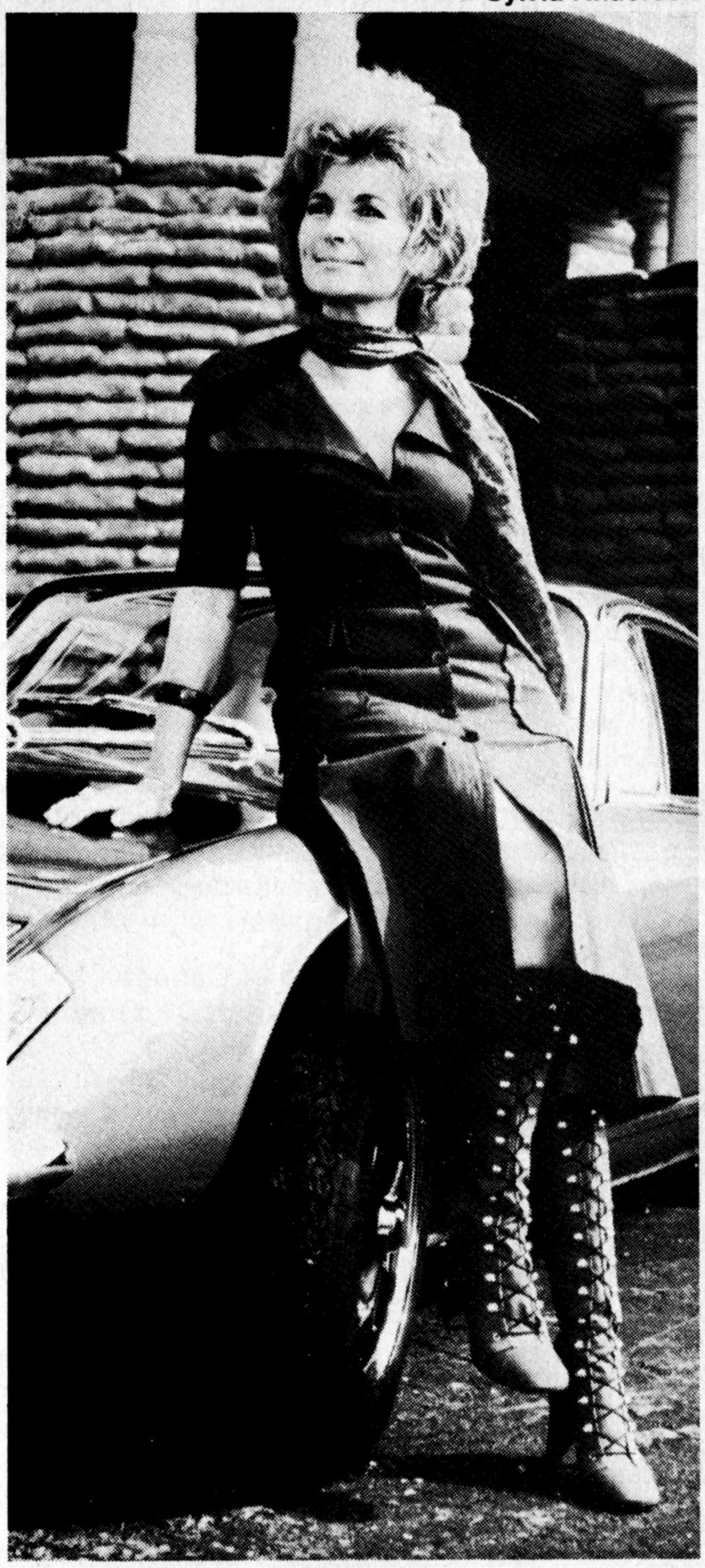
I did several films on surgical technique for the British Council, for example, and in an operating theatre, masked and overalled, making oneself as inconspicuous as possible, and at the same time observing as much as possible, the last thing that you or anyone else thinks about is sex.

Work at the Children's Film Department - later re-named Children's Entertainment Films - was rather different... Mary Field was appointed as director and I was the story editor. This was therefore a woman's department, but the film makers were recruited from various film companies and were nearly all men - producers, directors and camera crews. It made no difference.

Children's films have changed as adult films have changed in the last twenty years. The characters in the children's films are sometimes tougher and harsher. But I do not think this is because men are now in charge of the department. The films have been influenced by a change in the quality of the directors, who have always been men.

your questions are considered but frankly being discrimination against women in the film business is rampant there NO Name for it.

Polly Elliott



Sylvia Anderson

Among those who sent replies to the questionnaire are — Sylvia Spring: Canada's first woman feature film Director; ***Madeleine Is****. Stephanie Rothman: Director for Roger Corman's New World Films;* ***It's a Bikini World, Student Nurses, The Velvet Vampire****. Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: Director of documentaries for Canada's National Film Board;* ***The Things We Cannot Change****. Anita Loos: Playwright/Director/Screenwriter who wrote her first film at age 12;* ***Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, The Americano, Gigi****. Eleanor Perry: Screenwriter working with husband Frank Perry;* ***David and Lisa, The Swimmer, Diary of a Mad Housewife****. Judy Steed: Canadian TV and Film Director;* ***Clowns and Monsters, It's Gonna Be All Right****. Betty E. Box: British Producer of all the Doctor series;* ***Doctor at Large, Tale of Two Cities, Deadlier Than the Male****. Mary Cathcart Borer: Screenwriter in Rank's Children's Department;* ***Tabitha, Shadows on the Sand****. Sylvia Anderson: British TV and Film Writer/Producer;* ***Thunderbird, Doppelganger, The Secret Service.*** *Polly Elliott: presently working on a film adaptation of Sylvia Plath's "Belljar".*

that I have seen have not directly influenced my own films. I am, however, particularly impressed by the work of Agnes Varda (**Lion's Love**) because I see her work as being very 'together', strong, searching, joyful and sad at the same time.

Sylvia Anderson: Regrettably I have not been influenced by any one woman filmmaker because there just aren't enough around to make any sort of impact. I suppose I admire Mai Zetterling if anyone at all because she has broken through the tremendously difficult barrier of actress to Director/Producer and a damned good one at that.

I've never understood why there are so few women directors. Men will say that it is a lack of physical stamina—I prefer to think that it is lack of opportunity and that the long fight to get there has—until recently—taken second place to marriages, family and possibly divorce. With the more enlightened attitude of the younger generation and the advent of Women's Lib let us hope that this will change.

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: Agnes Varda's films when I used to go to films and all films I've seen—stimulation, togetherness, despair.

Stephanie Rothman: I regret to say that I have not been influenced by any. I attribute this to the fact that there are so few, and to the difficulty I have seeing films made by women from other countries. I know there are some women working in both western and eastern Europe and I would love to see their work. The only European director whose films I am familiar with is Agnes Varda.

5. *In films made by women, are there common characteristics that you feel are directly attributable to the sex of their creators, and if so what are they?*

Sylvia Spring: I don't know. But I have seen a quality in the writing of women that seems to run throughout a lot of their work. Perhaps it is also true in their films. It is the vision of women as 'victims' of a system beyond their control. It is internalized, self-searching, confused, martyred with no positive action coming from her, only a need

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to define herself in her own terms.

Sylvia Anderson: If any one trait probably women filmmakers are able to handle emotional situations on the screen in a sensitive and thoughtful way—probably because they've been where it's at for the past decade—mostly being on the receiving end of the emotional knocks that life usually dishes out!

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: I can't think of any other women filmmakers except Joyce Wieland. Yes, females have different concerns from men but the same oranges and lemons.

6. *Which film genres are particularly suitable for women filmmakers, and which are particularly unsuitable, and why?*

Sylvia Spring: A biased question. Biologically we are not at any disadvantage but from a social/cultural level all genres are hard to get into because the control is ultimately in the hands of men and not many of them are liberated.

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: Any for any—an individual concern.

Stephanie Rothman: I don't see why a woman couldn't make any kind of film she set out to make. All societies are organized so that men and women are customarily not exposed to certain types of knowledge. For example, few women have any direct experience with military life. However, intelligent study and analysis of any subject ought to yield up the information necessary to deal with it if one is motivated to do so.

7. *Are women filmmakers generally more experimental than men? Why and in what ways?*

Sylvia Spring: Again, a purely hypothetical question . . . we have not done enough, to my knowledge, to know what we can do best (if in fact we can say that all women have the same talents or interests). I suspect that if women could free themselves from the male ideas of what makes a good film, they would come up with a very different and perhaps more experimental approach. And we have the advantage of learning from our brothers' mistakes.

Sylvia Anderson: I think that women as a whole are far more courageous than men. Not necessarily physically but morally—men mostly are moral cowards so on that score I would say given the chance women would be more experimental than their male counterparts.

Tanya Ballantyne MacKay: No. I try to be objective in my judgment.

8. *Do you sympathize with the movement for women's liberation? Do you belong to any groups concerned with this movement?*

Sylvia Spring: Yes. Yes. This is a point I would like to expand upon. I am presently working with several women's groups. The B.C. Women for Abortion Repeal; a weekly women's seminar group at UBC called 'The Canadian Woman'; and a women's Action group. With the latter group I am working as a resource person from Metro Media (a new concept in community programming for cable TV) and as an involved woman concerned about the lack of women in TV programming. The object of this group of women is to bring to the attention of the public the fact of the very sexist, insulting or inaccurate view of women in TV commercials, documentaries and dramas. We plan to do this with our video tape equipment using satire, drama and confrontation techniques. Our first show will consist of a mock trial of a woman by her husband for not being 'a good wife'.

Sylvia Anderson: I have always conducted my own personal Women's Lib campaign and anyway I hate labels but allowing for the fact that a lot of the Lib movement is extreme I am basically in sympathy. I appreciate in saying this that in order to be heard the movement must be dramatic and in some instances brash and unrealistic but I certainly will benefit from the Lib pioneers even if they do go a bit far in their views.

Stephanie Rothman: I sympathize strongly with their aims. I was conducting my own life in a style that women's liberationists now advocate long before there was a movement. However, it is good to see that the dissatisfactions that women feel with their social and economic roles are at last being publicly expressed. At least it is a first step toward correcting some of the numerous injustices that exist.

I do not belong to any organized women's liberation groups. The only reason I can give for this is that I am basically a nonjoiner, a lone wolf. However, I do try to help my fellow women get ahead when it is in my power to do so. I have hired women to work in areas of filmmaking where they have been traditionally excluded, and will continue to do it. The sound mixer on **The Student Nurses** was a woman and the art director on **The Velvet Vampire** was too. I would really like to find a good female cinematographer to work with. Do you know any?

No matter how skillful the painter, his work was always in fee to an inescapable subjectivity.

Viewed in this perspective, the cinema is objectivity in time . . . . Now, for the first time, the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified, as it were.

—André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*

Here is another organic secret: a leaping imagist movement from quality to quality is *not a mere formula of growth* but is more, *a formula of development*—a development that involves us in its canon, not only as a single 'vegetative' unit, subordinate to the evolutionary laws of nature, but makes us, instead, a collective and social unit, consciously participating in its development. (His emphasis)

. . . the first thing to appear clearly relating to the principal function of the close-up in our cinema is—not only and not so much to show or to *present,* as to *signify,* to *give meaning,* to *designate.* (His emphasis)

—Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form*

I noticed a woman on the stage whose face promised everything. This was Marlene Dietrich. I am credited with her discovery. This is not so. I am not an archaeologist who finds some buried bones with a pelvis that indicates a female. I am a teacher who took a beautiful woman, instructed her, presented her carefully, edited her charms, disguised her imperfections and led her to crystallize a pictorial aphrodisiac. She was a perfect medium, who with intelligence absorbed my direction, and despite her own misgivings responded to my conception of a female archetype. The balance of the players did as they were told.

But not so Jannings . . . . Fat and ungainly, with a complete memory for his own tricks, shifty like a pellet of quicksilver, . . . he was the perfect actor . . . . Aside from his objections to my choice of Dietrich, he opposed me every step of the way. This cannot be seen in the film, even I cannot see it.

—Josef von Sternberg, Introduction, *The Blue Angel*

I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.

—Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

Depersonalization is a technique that is universally used as a means of dealing with the other when he becomes too tiresome or disturbing . . . . The act of turning him into a thing is, *for him,* actually petrifying. (His emphasis)

Petrification is one way of killing. Of course to feel that another person is treating or regarding one not as a person but as a thing need not itself be frightening if one is sufficiently sure of one's own existence.

—R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self*

The scene has been described of [Stiller] holding forth about [Garbo's] merits to his baffled film associates who could discern in her neither beauty nor talent. Precisely the same scene was to take place in Germany a few years later, when Josef von Sternberg nominated his 'discovery,' Marlene Dietrich, to play in **The Blue Angel** against the vociferous opposition of his colleagues. In fact the scene is commoner than might be supposed in the film industry with its unique scope for realizing one's own fantasies while stimulating other people's. It occurs when a director-producer who is driven by an inner compulsion of which he may not be completely aware comes across malleable feminine material and proceeds to make it into an image that feeds his emotional needs.

—Alexander Walker, *Sex in the Movies*

"Do you think I am an automaton, a machine without feelings?"

—Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

"You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing."

—Marguerite Duras, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE OBJECTIFICATION OF Women

by Barbara Martineau

There is, I think, a provocative relationship in the above quotations between those which raise questions about the cinema and reality, those which suggest the destructive sense of thing-ness in people oppressed by others and/or themselves, and those which depict two very famous female movie stars as the creations of male directors. Larger issues emerge than may be explored here. But one, the notion of woman as object, is discussed with fair frequency just now—it even seems to be in danger of falling into disuse as an overworked cliché without having been sufficiently considered. For this notion is crucial to our understanding of the psychology of woman's oppression—it is closely linked with Fanon's analysis of black oppression and with Laing's study of schizophrenia as a metaphor for the human condition. All of these concepts derive from the existential understanding of Otherness, as both Laing and Fanon point out. Among those thinkers quoted above, Fanon and Eisenstein suggest that the key to resolution of the terrible problem resulting from depersonalization of the other must be sought in the concept of dialectic, itself hostile to any form of stasis. In this context the cinema, with its great range of possibility for communication, stifling or expansive, takes on a special relevance, particularly in terms of its use of women. So I conclude my germinal pastiche with a quotation from **Hiroshima, Mon Amour**, a film written by a woman, directed by a man, embodying dialectics between male and female, humane impulse and the forces of depersonalization and destruction, in which the opposing forces by the very nature of their opposition are fused by a creative understanding into a greater whole.

Now that is a mouthful to chew. Some concrete illustrations of the objectification of women may help.

In **The Blonde Venus** by Josef von Sternberg (1932) Marlene Dietrich plays a loving wife and mother who returns to her previous career as showgirl to raise money for an operation for her sick husband. Her salary isn't enough, and she finally accepts a rich admirer, sending hub off to the distant specialist who will save his life. When hub returns early and discovers all he throws her out, but wants to keep the kid. She however takes kid and flees, and the good part of the movie begins. Sternberg's Dietrich is chased by a now entirely symbolic Avenging Male, and as she is reduced to dire poverty a mysterious glow of Woman in Adversity (the Dietrich-Sternberg glow) positively lights the film. She is finally seen as a prostitute in New Orleans, leaving the angelic child in her room

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while she saunters out to encounter the private dick commissioned by hub. Did Sternberg mean us to understand prostitution as the universal condition of man-dominated woman or is it merely his concern to render Dietrich the eternal object of desire, owned by all men and therefore by no one, which makes him film her here as a mysterious object among other objects, half hidden by the hangings and by her fan? (A similar technique in **The Blue Angel**, where she is a Mysterious Destroyer, suggests the latter view.)

The dick wires hub, who hastens down to grab the kid and contemptuously fling money (the amount she'd earned for his operation) in Dietrich's face. At last she concurs in her own depersonalization, sinks to the lowest depths (lower than the brothel? Yes, the flophouse), but on encountering women even further gone than she, flings away (gives away in a magnificent gesture) the filthy lucre and vows to rise on her own to the top.

Next scene: Paris, a nightclub. Rich admirer who started all the trouble (no aspersions on hub please) is there to see star billed as The Blonde Venus. And what do we make of this. When she appears, having fought her way back from the bottom, Female Victorious, she is dressed in white, formal . . . tuxedo and top hat, flirting outrageously with attractive women in the audience, and thereby conquering every male heart. (The scene obviously satisfied Sternberg very deeply, because it is repeated almost exactly from **Morocco**.) What's going on? Is she like the princess in a remarkable Andrew Lang fairy tale who is so brave and resourceful in pretending to be a prince that she is rewarded by being turned into a man and wins the heart/hand of a great beauty? The apotheosis of female perfection is to be male? Other (male) minds have been attracted to similar solutions of the problem of the incomplete female—Defoe's Moll Flanders is clearly a wish-fulfilment combination of the natural resources of womanhood and the business enterprise and hardihood attributed to men. Shakespeare's finest flowers, including Cordelia, appear in male attire at some point or another, and often masquerade as men. Michelangelo's women . . . but that's another problem. Dietrich was famous for dressing in men's clothes, both on and off screen, and one wonders just how much was her clearly expressed preference for simplicity and how much was her director's shrewd advice. In any case there's a great contrast between the bulky, somewhat intimidating tweeds she sported offscreen, and the incredibly provocative, impeccably tailored male evening clothes she wears in Sternberg's films (always followed by a scene in flowing, ultrafeminine drapery).

I suggest that it is precisely the contrast between the *idea* of male attire and the sultry sexiness of Dietrich (as directed and lit by Sternberg) wearing it that Sternberg is after, and that in both **The Blonde Venus** and **Morocco** the device is used to balance an otherwise intolerable (to Sternberg and presumably to the male-orientated audience) sense of Dietrich's self-sufficiency. That coolness, that perfect indifference used already to such advantage in **The Blue Angel** and **Dishonored** must never be seen as emanating from inner self-reliance, but instead must come from a sweet confidence that she will always be some man's object of desire, and the very act of dressing up as a man is ironic because of the way it underlines her femininity. What renders Sternberg's films with Dietrich so breathtaking is the intensity of the conflict between his depiction of her as a super-tigress and the way he inevitably pulls back to parody her strength and make her just a brave kitten after all. And there's just enough of the tigress remaining to make that kitten a leetle ominous.

So the rest of the movie, with its reunion between Kitten, Daddy-cat, and baby Kitkins is just pure sap—sop to the censors or studio—Sternberg, not hub, is the true tamer, who knows never to break the spirit of his magnificent cat, or the miracle of her submission will be spoilt.

Throughout Reuben Mamoulian's **Queen Christina** Greta Garbo wears men's clothes: the focal point of our interest is the scene where she reveals herself as a woman to her lover-to-be, John Gilbert. The Swedish queen is touring incognito (in drag?) and encounters Gilbert/the Spanish ambassador on his way to seek Christina's hand in marriage for his master. They strike up a friendship which culminates in her being forced to share a room in the village inn with Gilbert (who has not penetrated her disguise, nor has the innkeeper). There follows the most wonderful scene, climaxed by Gilbert's (and our) vision of Garbo as he turns to see her standing in the pose of Van Eyck's Eve of the Ghent altarpiece, stomach and hip gently curving forward and out, and their relationship suddenly alters. Who else but Eve?

Mamoulian's objectification of Garbo is no less effective than Sternberg's proceedings with Dietrich, but there is a considerable difference which is hard to define. Let us see what comes next. Alexander Walker, in *Sex in the Movies,* describes the famous furniture-touching sequence of the morning after: "One can think of no other actress in Hollywood who could have carried off a scene which is a classic Method exercise in the art of 'objectification,' or relating oneself emotionally to the physical objects on a stage or film set." Walker ponders over whether or not Garbo's mentor, Maurice Stiller, had known of Stanislavski's theories, but he fails to mention that Mamoulian was a student of Stanislavski. (Indeed, and it's a sadly general failing, he doesn't mention Mamoulian at all.) Instead, he works out an elaborate explanation in which Garbo's tour of the objects in the inn room "in an aura of softly filtered femininity" is based on an offscreen episode in 1928, when Stiller died and Garbo visited his room, making "sad little comments" on various objects. Perhaps. But surely the point here is that the independent woman, her independence symbolized by her male clothing, has succumbed to what Mamoulian probably saw as her fate, to being a woman in love with a man and therefore, queen or no queen, no longer independent, and therefore akin to the objects around her. And this objectification, as Walker perceives, though his sense of the word is somewhat different from mine, is played "simultaneously for sorrow as well as joy." The source of both emotions is what I most question — surely Walker is off-base (as well as factually inaccurate) in suggesting merely that "she is wretchedly aware of the constitutional barrier to falling in love with the envoy of an unfriendly country."

I think that Mamoulian, as in **Applause, City Streets,** and **Song of Songs,** is here again intuitively aware of the degrading implications of the love relationship for a woman, at the same time that he (dutifully?) celebrates its sentimental glory. Certainly the Eve-like stance, intentional or not, reinforces this view, as does the prophetically ironic recall of the lost Paradise in Christina's announcement after touring the room: "This is how the Lord must have felt when he beheld the finished world with all his creatures, loving, breathing." Now Tom Milne, in his book *Mamoulian,* comments on this remark as follows: "Christina disposes of her kingdom, her life and her love, and like God on the Seventh Day, has no more to do but contemplate her creation and see that it is well. When she arrives on board the ship that was to carry them to Spain, she kneels beside her lover, mortally wounded in a duel with Magnus. He dies, she pulls her cloak about her face, and moves almost with exaltation into the bows to face the warm winds and sun of Spain he promised, her serenity rippled by a grief that is itself almost tranquil in its acceptance of inevitability." As for this last great close-up, Milne has already quoted Mamoulian's direction to Garbo: "I want your face to be a blank sheet of paper. I want the writing to be done by every member of the audience. I'd like it if you could avoid even blinking your eyes, so that you're nothing but a beautiful mask." Obviously Mamoulian was repeating with a variation the famous experiment of Kuleshov and Pudovkin with the impassive face of the actor Mosjukhin (intercut with various images it seemed as if a wonderful variety of expressions crossed his face), but I think of Ahab's monomaniac vision of the pasteboard masks of the universe, and conclude that something like his yearning to stand equal with God is what Eve-Christina-Garbo has in mind (wasn't that the rationale for eating the apple in the first place?), and somehow that is connected with the way women are depersonalized by elevation into goddesses (the Pedestal).

Elevation may be the fastest way down — it's interesting, in comparing the two, that Garbo pulled out years ago and Dietrich is still going. Something to do with wearing those bulky, real, man's clothes off-screen? And camping in mudholes during the war?

It is conceivable that other kinds of writer, such as playwrights or novelists, may for the moment be able to work in a more cinematic way than the film people.

— Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*

So far we have remained within the traditional pattern of man as creative artist, woman as malleable material, epitomized by the

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A SERIES OF QUOTES .....

Sternberg-Dietrich partnership. The cinema tends to emphasize this pattern, at least that cinema which is star-centered and/or fictional plot-centered, because then the outer attributes of personality, those most used in stereotyping and therefore objectifying people, are stressed by the camera's concentration on single important figures. This aspect of the cinema is discussed by Doris Lessing in *The Golden Notebook*, a novel which uses film as a constantly recurring metaphor for clearer vision. Lessing's example allows us to think about the difference which results when a woman assumes the creative role and then uses that role to examine the manipulation of other women.

> We're told so often that human personality has disintegrated into nothing under pressure of all our knowledge that I've even been believing it. Yet when I look back to that group under the trees, and re-create them in my memory, suddenly I know it's nonsense. Suppose I were to meet Maryrose, now, all these years later, she'd make some gesture, or turn her eyes in such a way, and there she'd be, Maryrose, and indestructible. Or suppose she 'broke down,' or became mad. She would break down into her components, and the gesture, the movement of the eyes would remain, even though some connection had gone. And so all this talk, this anti-humanist bullying, about the evaporation of the personality becomes meaningless for me at that point where I manufacture enough emotional energy inside myself to create in memory some human being I've known. I sit down, and remember the smell of the dust and the moonlight, and see Ted handing a glass of wine to George, and George's overgrateful response to the gesture. Or I see, as in a slow-motion film, Maryrose turn her head, with her terrifyingly patient smile . . . I've written the word film. Yes. The moments I remember have all the absolute assurance of a smile, a look, a gesture, in a painting or a film. Am I saying then that the certainty I'm clinging to belongs to the visual arts, and not to the novel, not to the novel at all, which has been claimed by the disintegration and the collapse? What business has a novelist to cling to the memory of a smile or a look, knowing so well the complexities behind them? Yet if I did not, I'd never be able to set a word down on paper; . . .

It is important to note that Anna, the central figure of *The Golden Notebook* and writer of this passage, has chosen Maryrose and not one of the men in the group as the subject of her speculation on personality, the novel, and film. Of all the carefully drawn figures in the group of friends Maryrose emerges most vividly, and the closest bond we see is between her and Anna — she is a mirror for Anna's sense of objectified womanhood. For example, when one of the men in the group says: " 'All the beautiful women there are in the world, and we only have two of them here, it makes me want to cry,' " Anna goes on: "The men laughed and Maryrose smiled at me. I smiled back. Her smile was full of a sudden pain, and so I realised that mine was also. Then she looked uncomfortable, at having betrayed herself, and we quickly looked away from each other, from the exposed moment. I don't think either of us would have cared to analyse the pain we felt." For the sheer ironic contrast of a male attitude to this sort of relationship I think of how Andrew Sarris concluded his "woman-as-director" review of **Wanda**: "all in all it is the extraordinary good fortune of Barbara Loden the director to have had Barbara Loden the actress to manipulate with such impulsive immediacy." (*Village Voice*, March 18, 1971)

So far a fairly simplistic point has been made: many human relationships tend to place people in the positions of object and objectifier (often it is the simple act of perception that does this), and when a woman assumes a traditionally male objectifying role of, say, director or writer, and from that stance considers the position of woman as object, then I think an intensity and clarity of presentation may result which overcomes the dilemma of objectivity. By objectively presenting a woman as object a woman may transcend her own objecthood. Well. But in the course of development of Anna and *The Golden Notebook* a greater vision than this emerges, and again the film metaphor is crucial. The question is, with what do we replace the subject-object treadmill?

To approach this central issue of the novel, we must have some idea of Lessing's structure. Anna keeps four notebooks, among which she divides her personal, political, and creative perceptions, and the whole novel is composed of sections from these notebooks, third-person sections about Anna and her friends, and a section from the golden notebook which is meant by Anna to be a synthesis, "all of myself in one book," but which is abandoned after a few entries because a man, Anna's current lover, wants it for his novel — it is her parting gift to him. The question at the end (the final section reverts to third-person) is left open as to whether Anna is now capable of a synthesis, of making of herself and her life an integral whole, or whether she is still in the process of a "break-down into her components" which she had once feared for Maryrose. The more positive aspect of the question is illustrated by a sequence of film-dreams towards the end of the book.

Anna dreams twice about being shown scenes from her life and notebooks as films, by a projectionist who is at once her current lover and the embodiment of an earlier dream figure which she first names the principle of destruction and later, more ambivalently, names "joy-in-malice". *Naming* is a crucial level of Anna's thought, closely akin to filmic vision, and both have to do with the possibility of relation with others, extending to understanding and communication, which are needs at once essential to human existence and destructive of it. It is not enough for the "I" to feel secure in itself, sure of its own identity — the equal claim to identity of all others must be comprehended through correct naming and clear vision, and this may be impossible, given the nature of reality. Hence, I think, the great reliance on film metaphor, and suggestion that the traditional novel form is too limiting, and at the same time the impulse to merge the two forms, is a recognition that a similar merger must take place in the very process of perception. Even before the two projectionist dreams explicate this point there is a preparation in a waking-film-fantasy:

> My emotions had switched off, but my mind ran on, making images like a film. I was checking the images, or scenes, as they went past, for I was able to recognise them as fantasies common to a certain kind of person now, out of common stock, shared by millions of people. I saw an Algerian soldier stretched on a torture bed; and I was also him, wondering how long I could hold out . . . . Then the British conscript, pressed into war in Egypt, killed for futility. Then a student in Budapest, throwing a home-made bomb at a great black Russian tank. Then a peasant, somewhere in China, marching in a procession millions strong.
>
> These pictures flicked in front of my eyes. I thought that five years ago the pictures would have been different, and that in five years they would be different again; but that now they were what bound people, of a certain kind, unknown to each other as individuals, together.

This insight comes very near the end of the last of Anna's four notebooks; she has yet to go through the disintegration-reintegration process chronicled in the golden notebook. In that process she becomes aware of a part of her mind which, she says, "I knew was the disinterested personality who had saved me from disintegration. . . . He said that instead of doing what I always do, making up stories about life, so as not to look at it straight, I should go back and look at scenes from my life . . . . It was not making past events harmless, by naming them, but *making sure they were still there*. Yet I knew that having made sure they were still there I would have to 'name' them in a different way." (Her emphasis)

> Feeling sick I listened to the voice saying: 'And what makes you think that the emphasis you have put on it is correct?' while he, the projectionist, began running the film through again, or rather the films, for there were several, and I was able, as they flicked past me on the screen, to isolate and 'name' them. The Mashopi film; the film about Paul and Ella; . . . They were all, so I saw now, conventionally, well-made films, as if they had been done in a studio; then I saw the titles: these films, which were everything I hated most, had been directed by me. The projectionist kept running these films very fast, and then pausing on the credits, and I could hear his jeering laugh at **Directed by Anna Wulf.** Then he would run another few scenes, every scene glossy with untruth, false and stupid. I shouted at the projectionist: 'But they aren't mine, I didn't make them.' At which the projectionist, almost bored with confidence, let the scenes vanish, and he waited for me to prove him wrong. And now it was terrible, because I was faced with the burden of re-creating order out of the chaos that my life had become.

A rather Brechtian concept of the possibilities of film is emerging here, a far cry from the director-manipulating-his-actresses style

FROM MOVIES AND BOOKS.

discussed earlier. Anna's film-dreams are not wish-fulfilments nor are they escapist: she is trying to use film (and seeing the pitfalls of the attempt) as an extension of her writing, to come to terms with the tortured world which she inhabits along with everyone else. The price of failure is madness, but sanity is not guaranteed by success. The Brechtian point being made is that personal identification is not at all the key; the need is for *human* identification, and that means a sort of objectivity which is quite different from the objectification of female stars such as Dietrich and Garbo.

The best explanation (and a provocative final note) is the second projectionist-dream, which Anna has after an exhausting sexual politics confrontation with the man who is to go off with her golden notebook, who is also one aspect of the projectionist figure. It is made very clear that the dream is a learning dream, in fact "a summing up, for emphasis' sake, of something learned." In the course of the dream events which have been described earlier and quite differently by Anna are reinterpreted, or rather, reseen, with what I would call a Brechtian objectivity. No longer are we looking from the subjective viewpoint at Others-as-objects; instead each person is seen in his/her objective existence as a person related by circumstance and motivation to other persons:

> As soon as the dream came on, the projectionist said, in Saul's voice . . . : 'And now we'll just run through them again.' I was embarrassed, because I was afraid I'd see the same set of films I had seen before — glossy and unreal. But this time, while they were the same films, they had another quality, which in the dream I named 'realistic'; they had a rough, crude, rather jerky quality of an early Russian or German film. Patches of the film slowed down for long, long stretches while I watched, absorbed, details I had not had time to notice in life. The projectionist kept saying, when I had got some point he wanted me to get: 'That's it lady, that's it.' . . . So that I watched, for an immense time, noting every movement, how Mrs. Boothby stood in the kitchen of the hotel at Mashopi, her stout buttocks projecting like a shelf under the pressure of her corsets, patches of sweat dark under her armpits, her face flushed with distress, while she cut cold meat off various joints of animal and fowl, and listened to the young cruel voices and crueler laughter through a thin wall . . . And I saw Mr. Lattimer, drinking in the bar, carefully not looking at Mr Boothby, while he listened to his beautiful red-haired wife's laughter. I saw him, again and again, bend down, shaky with drunkenness, to stroke the feathery red dog, stroking it, stroking it. 'Get it?' said the projectionist, and ran another scene . . . . Then the film went very fast, it flicked past, like a dream, on faces I've seen once in the street, and have forgotten, on the slow movement of an arm, on the movement of a pair of eyes, all saying the same thing — the film was now beyond my experience, beyond Ella's beyond the notebooks, because there was a fusion; and instead of seeing separate scenes, people's faces, movements, glances, they were all together. The film became immensely slow again, it became a series of moments where a peasant's hand bent to drop seed into earth, or a rock stood glistening while water slowly wore it down, or a man stood on a dry hillside in the moonlight, stood eternally, his rifle ready on his arm. Or a woman lay awake in darkness, saying no, I won't kill myself, I won't, I won't.

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Donald R. Gordon

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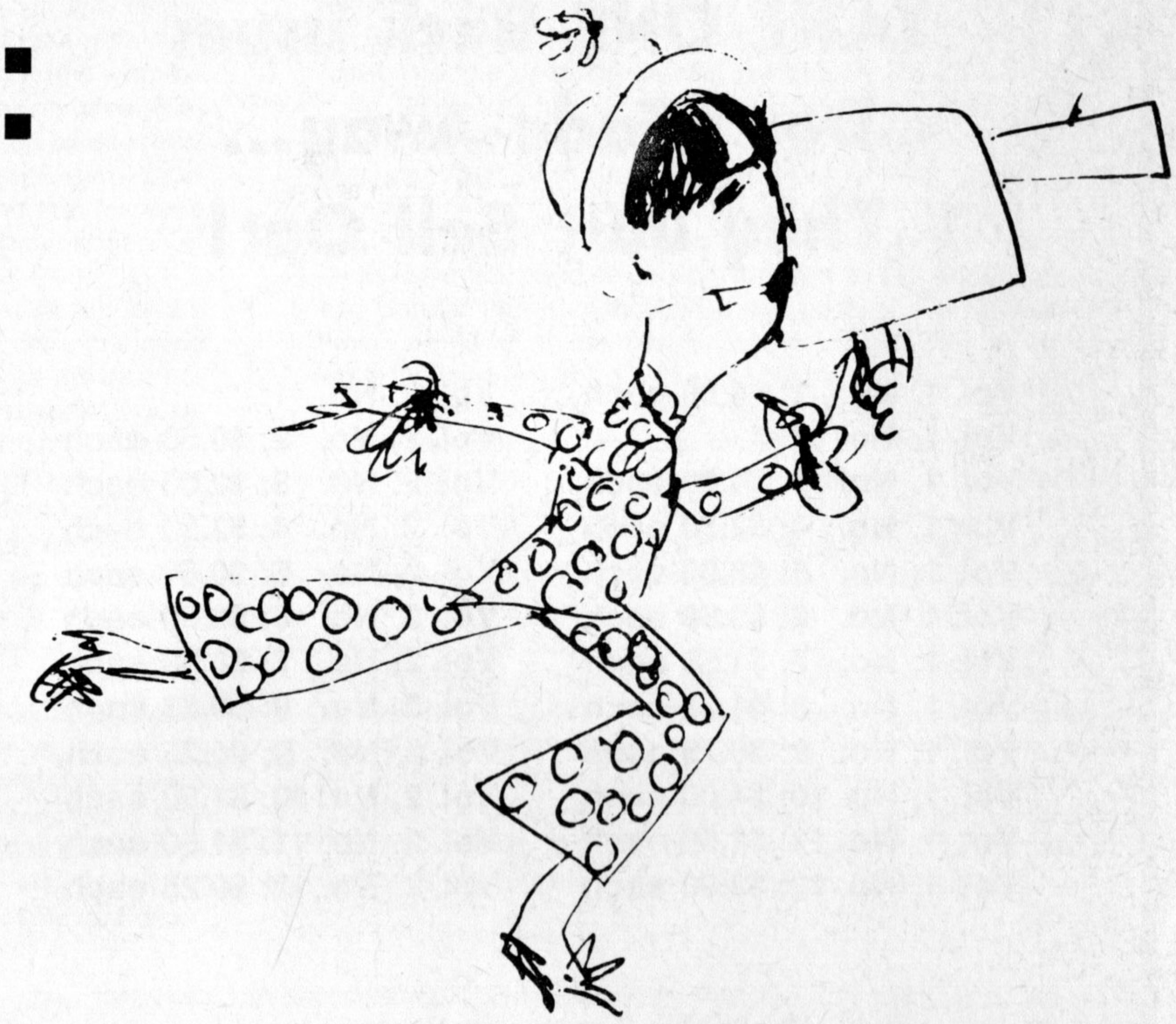
SHIRLEY CLARKE: IMAGE AND IMAGES



interviewed by Susan Rice

"I used to feel that I could never do a film about myself because my life wasn't interesting enough to waste anyone's time — including my own — looking at it. My life is just one long bore. The most interesting thing about me is my work — since I have less and less life, social life and human relationships. Pretty much everything I do is related to my work or 'image', which is why I do the work. I do the work to make me happy — not because I've got any burning message to get out."

Shirley Clarke lives in one of the few remaining New York garret apartments with her two French poodles. Almost everything in the place plugs into something . . . except the poodles who seem real enough, and Shirley who is very real.

Clarke moves with the times and the technology. She made the transition from smart-aleck New York kid to dancing with Doris Humphrey to independent filmmaking to videotape. Each of these experiences seems to inform the others.

You have to extract interviews from most people. The process is a strange one because while you are in the warm glory that most celebrities generate, you really believe they are saying "important things." Then you listen to your tape/read your notes and realize that what they have been saying resembles the blurbs in the daily horoscope . . . only less articulate. Interviewing Shirley Clarke is different because Clarke is very aware of the process of committing personalities to media. This is almost exclusively what she is doing these days with the medium of videotape. When I went up to see her the cameras were rolling. Shirley was in motion most of the time — adjusting the tripod, taking sound levels, moving the monitor around so we could see ourselves as she taped. I found the process unnerving and revelatory. It made us share the power.

Most everything Clarke had to say was fascinating. Strong enough, really, to persuade me to dispense with the conventional interview formats . . . A Conversation With, A Dialogue With, An Intimate Look At. So what I am going to do here is index Shirley Clarke. You can thumb through, choosing the topics that interest you. Everything that appears here is pretty much in the form she said it. Sort of a linear **Portrait of Shirley.**

IMAGE

Not too long ago, the New Yorker Film Series played at the St. Mark's Theatre. Two of my films were playing, and in a little box it said, "Shirley Clarke's **The Connection** (1960) and Marlene Dietrich's **Blue Angel**." Later on it said, "Clarke — **Portrait of Jason** (1967) and Bette Davis **Of Human Bondage**." I had never been called "Clarke" before. It was always Shirley Clarke or Miss Clarke or Mrs. Clarke. Men are always called by their last names. It made me feel good to be "Clarke" because it gave me status . . . image. Why do I want status? Because we're all afraid of being insignificant. Not thinking deep, meaningful thoughts. That's what I've always been afraid of. There are thoughts that I've had that I think would be worth communicating to other people — that's always been the kind of film I've tried to make, and it's always the same one. Which is an attitude I think most artists deal with. There is a part of me that wants recognition, but I want it very specifically on my own terms. I want a "dignified" image. Which means that I'm taken seriously as a filmmaker. Like my films, you'll like me. And that to me is a more comfortable way of being liked than in the obsolute personal way. There is another side of me that wished the Love Children were for real . . . the whole status thing is evil; these aren't the important things in life. I tried for a couple of years to lose being Shirley Clarke. I didn't do anything. I wouldn't let my films be shown. I wouldn't do interviews. About a year ago, as I got into video, I admitted defeat. For two reasons: 1) I had to be me in order to survive to do anything. 2) I needed the recognition. I was uncomfortable, even slightly insulted, when I succeeded at being anonymous. I wondered where people had been that they shouldn't know me through my work. My films constantly play and I dig that. I like being a 'classic' rather than a 'Hollywood' filmmaker. I'm selfish. I expect celebrity. Recognition as an artist I expect from my peers.

I started all this by saying how I felt about being called Clarke. I've always felt put down by other filmmakers, never taken seriously. Always brushed off as though I'm fairly superficial. Never fitting anywhere. I was never "underground." I was never "Hollywood." There was no group I was part of. I always hoped there was a niche I could fit into, but I never did. This has more to do with me than it has to do with my being a woman. In dancing, I could never be in the company. I had to be a soloist.

CLARKE FILMS

My films look different from other people's films. The only thing that's changed is that I've gotten better at what I do. The ideas haven't changed. Most of my films are messages to other filmmakers about things they are doing that I question. Things I would like them to take a look at. A very good example and the clearest one is **Portrait of Jason**, which was made to show Ricky and Penny (Leacock and

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Pennebaker) the flaws in thinking about cinéma vérité. If you take twelve days of shooting and edit only the climax points, you get crap. My theory was that you don't take out the 'boring parts' — the way someone reaches those climaxes or an idea or whatever. **Jason** is two hours of real time, not film time. The film took four hours to make because we had to stop every ten minutes to re-load the camera. All we shot is there. I would leave a scene in even if there were things in it I didn't dig. I don't believe there is any such thing as 'documentary reality.' Right away there's an opinion given when you ask a question. All of this evokes very conscious playing at not-acting. There is no difference between a traditional fiction film and a documentary. I've never made a documentary. There is no such trip. I felt secure about making **Jason**, but that doesn't help. When I made the film nobody — not even friends of mine — thought it was a good idea. But I knew enough about film by then to know what it would do.

SHIRLEY STEPS OUT

I never went and studied film any place or began as an editor or script writer. The first thing I did was make a finished film — **A Dance in the Sun** (1954). I had a camera that was given to me as a wedding present. The people I went to rent lights from became my crew, along with my husband. I didn't want to throw my dancing out the window, so I thought I'd make a dance film. I'd seen a few and I thought they were awful and I figured I'd have to be an idiot not to make a better one. Then I got enamoured of filmmaking. I found it more interesting than dance.

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I made a film for Expo and was paid a really phenomenal salary. I put that into **Jason**. NBC gave me 16mm film stock. I shot in 16mm and that was stupid because the most fucking inexpensive thing is the film stock. The film ended up costing $10,000 because of the blow-up to 35mm. I then had no money to distribute it, so the Film-maker's Distribution Center took it. When they folded, I pulled it. I've just given it to Dan Talbot (New Yorker Films) to distribute.

DISTRIBUTION

Nobody knows how to distribute independent films. Even if you're promised 90% of the profits, I assure you you'll never see a penny. If you have 1% of the gross you'll see something. I never made money 'til I made **Jason** because I owned **Jason**.

THE COOL WORLD OF FRED WISEMAN

Fred Wiseman screwed me on **The Cool World**. I've never even seen a statement. I'm not so much as allowed a copy of the film because he's afraid I'll show it for free. Wiseman produced the film to cop a career. He wanted to become a filmmaker.

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING VS. STUDIO FILMMAKING

I chose independent filmmaking rather than studio filmmaking because I didn't want the studios to decide what people should see. They don't know. If they knew they'd only make successes. They're floundering and they're very unstable. They never understood what I had done or what I wanted to do. And that's why it's so hard to get studio backing.

GOOD-BYE TO FILM

I couldn't use film now. I don't think it's a satisfactory medium. I never did. It was a substitute — a very uncomfortable medium. The time-lapse thing — the time between looking through the lens and the projected image — is a disaster. It doesn't bear a significant relationship to my eye and ear. The little thing I look through is not the thing I see on the screen. After a certain point they're not your films. They're just films. I wouldn't go to them. I don't like that kind of film anymore. I like to go to "movies" — I like the Marx Brothers' movies. I love **Casablanca.** Good movies.

INTUITION

My instinct is real — that I can trust. When I was a dancer I was totally unable to rely on my intuition. Now I trust it. That's the one thing in life I can say I've learned — my intuition is always right. Very often I go against it, meaning that it's sometimes inconvenient to go with it. The fact that it's right doesn't always mean it's the easiest thing to do. Sometimes it's rude. It means being shitty or not doing what some other part of me wants. So I've had to rationalize. And every rationalization I've paid for. But I'm really scared of failure. If, for instance, I can't come up with tapes that are good — and I *know* what I'm looking for — then my skill is in question. Not my head. I don't doubt my head. I doubt my skill.

ART

Most artists choose a form to rationalize or compensate for a personal problem. Martha Graham's dances are built on her shape. Literally, the way her body is built. And yet this fantastic dance technique has come about. I think tape is a potential art form. But it isn't one yet. Films are closer to it. I can think of many films that come close to it, like **8 1/2**, but I'm not yet comfortable about saying

Drawings of Shirley Clarke by Joyce Wieland

that they are works of art like, say, Beethoven's 7th Symphony or a Chopin etude or Giotto. I think this is more a function of the use of the art form than it is a function of time. The pre-historic paintings on the caves of Lascaux are works of art, but they weren't *intended* to be. I'm not sure real art is the intent to make art. One intends to do something else. I never sat down to make art. When I make things, I intend a specific *use* value. Very often, in my case, I was working with *form*.

TREND SETTING

I don't know whether I start styles or pick them up very quickly. I think maybe I set them. Like caps and derbies which I wore for years as magic filmmaking hats. Now I'm trying to push the top hat. When I see it in regular stores, I'll know I've made it. It's the same with art. If you are in the present you're in advance because most people are in the past. Not an original thought. Sometimes I think 'art' is creating the present in a form that makes it viewable or understandable — except for science fiction writers who are man's future fantasy. They costume design the future. There I have a lot of problems. I don't know whether it's jealousy or confusion.

THE WOMAN'S THING

I have yet to receive a piece of women's lib literature. So does Viva. So does every woman I know who has really done anything. I mean, the movement seems to be made up of people who, for the most part, haven't done anything. You can cop a career any way you want. It's a valid thing, I suppose, copping a career. Now everything they say I totally agree with. But their style and manner is boring and unattractive. And I don't mean "sexy/attractive to men". They're simply not attractive as people. (Like the Communist party. There's nothing wrong with the Party, it's just that everybody in it is so goddam unattractive.) That's some kind of snobbism, but I cringe to think of identifying with them. I don't think they're recognizing the past history of what other women have done. Women have been fantastic for a long time — they act like they invented it. The models are there. I don't know why they're not hailed as heroines. The younger girls is really where it's at. The Movement's done a lot for them. The generation that's now in its 20's will not have to put up with so much bullshit. Whatever field they're in. Women's Lib is merely something that gets them there.

WOMEN IN VIDEO

Women are really in there but they are not quite yet the equals of men, but they're a lot closer than they were with film or ever will be. Partly because of the portability of the equipment. With film, the

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technology was really stacked against us. Those monster cameras.

WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVALS

The chauvinism of a Women's Film Festival is so unbearable. I mean, you're talking about jealousy. Here are these poor chicks. They're not going to make it because they're not really recognizing the women who *have* made films . . . Storm de Hirsch, Mary Ellen Bute, Sandy Daley. God knows my films aren't being shown. I really don't know what they expect to accomplish. I'm not sure that pulling all these films together makes any statement but a sour grapes one. And if the films fail, they'll question the women's talent, rather than the conditions under which they had to make the films.

WOMEN IN FILM

There's all this crying about "Why didn't you take us?". We weren't there, that's why. Women are just beginning to dare to go into film. I left that medium because there wasn't any way for me to continue making films. I couldn't find a producer who would accept my scripts as I wrote them.

$$$ AGAIN

I didn't have any means of getting money. It may have to do with the fact that people with money do not talk about money to women. That's one of the things that showed up in my Hollywood dealings. Everyone said, "Fantastic! Do something for us. But don't expect much. Being a woman, it's going to be difficult." So when I got out there, they had a *man* who was going to be my producer. And he was also going to tell me how I should make my film. There's nothing wrong with a man fronting for bread. That's exactly how I got to make **The Cool World** and **The Connection** — I got guys to front for me. I don't seem to be serious in a certain way. Financially. My films weren't blockbusters, but that has to do with the nature of independent filmmaking. (See DISTRIBUTION). Men just don't like to talk to women about money — that's all.

VIDEOTAPE

I think it's a very intuitive medium. The better I get at it, the better I am able to respond to the right thing at the right time . . . like setting up strategically for the best composition. You have to be ready. You have to set it up and not blow it. I have to practice enough to know automatically. Video for me is the closest I've gotten to feeling as good as I felt when I was a dancer. This immediate response, the live thing. You see it, you feel it. You don't have that terribly complicated time-gap of film.

VIDEO AND EDITING

I'm a good editor but I've stayed away from that in video because I'm not sure that's what it's about. I see the 'video edit' as a way of using instantaneous replay to make another tape. It's editing in the sense that it's after the fact of that moment. Tapes don't have a beginning or an end. They're so constructed in relationship to one another that they always synchronize. These 'synch points' are connections — no matter what gets fed in. They grow and change. They get erased. In video you use the monitor *with* the camera — they feed off each other. I call this "enfolding". In film, you use the camera to get something on the screen.

THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIUM

I see the development of video in two ways. 1) Novel/painting. I who can't draw a line can paint fantastic images electronically. The more I study it, the more I can do it. 2) Theatre/experience. This has to do with the interchange between people and comes somewhat closer to therapy. And that's art too because it can make you feel better. I'm not in a position with video that I was with film of asking the *audience* to choose. You have to play to sponsors. A drag. The mystery is how to get the audience watching. The cable is the same as the networks . . . only worse. They want to charge *us* for showing our tapes. The community can put anything they want on the cable, right? So long as they pay the technical fee, $50.00 an hour. I'd rather work for a network.

THE PRESENT VIDEO

It's a very exciting time . . . like Lumière and Méliès in film. When Renoir was making his films in the camera and Bunuel and Dali were doing their experiments. It's a very big field and no one is quite sure what directions it can possibly take. If one does not use this fantastic miracle of instantaneous replay — of enfolding — you really have nothing to do with video. It's a fantastic experience for the participants.

SHIRLEY'S WORLD

My ideas about video tend to be somewhat theatrical and grandiose. But that only means I've got to learn the medium better. I get so many ideas that I have to stop myself and see one or two of them through. You have to commit yourself to something. When I made my first film I hated it, but I knew if I didn't finish it I'd never make another. I've finished more than I didn't finish.

WIELAND

JOYCE WIELAND

Filmography

1963	**Larry's Recent Behaviour**	8 mm, colour, 18 min.
1964	**Peggy's Blue Skylight**	8 mm, b/w, 17 min.
	Patriotism (Part One)	8 mm, colour, 15 min.
	Patriotism (Part Two)	8 mm, colour, 5 min.
1964-5	**Water Sark**	16 mm, colour, 14 min.
1967-8	**Sailboat**	16 mm, b/w printed on colour stock, 3 1/2 min.
	1933	16 mm, colour, 4 min.
	Hand-Tinting	16 mm, b/w stock, hand-tinted, 4 min., silent
1968	**Catfood**	16 mm, colour, 13 min.
	Rat Life and Diet in North America	16 mm, colour, 14 min.
1967-9	**Reason Over Passion**	16 mm, colour, 90 min.
1969	**Dripping Water**	16 mm, b/w, 10 min. (co-directed by Michael Snow)

This interview was taped and transcribed early in October, 1971. Since then, Joyce Wieland has rewritten some parts of the interview, and has added some explanatory material.

Can you tell me about ***Hand Tinting*** *and about the . . . was it a school or a retraining centre?*
It was a retraining centre in West Virginia run by Xerox and we made a documentary—
Who's we?
Another Canadian, Sylvia Davern, who was working in animation at the time and two American girls, one doing sound and another shooting. The job came through Sylvia's company.
Were you commissioned to do it?
Yes.
And where was it to be shown?
TV. Anyway I took some of my own outs from the film—some of which were genuine old-fashioned cutaways, and which I felt very strongly about, and began to make **Hand Tinting.**
It's a lovely film.
I think it has more to do with what was going on at the Centre than the commissioned film.
Some of the images that are repeated . . . I began to feel very warm, for instance, towards that girl with the bathing cap.
Yes, there's a lot of repetition in a small space.
How do you feel about the subjects that you're working with?
I hardly know whether to laugh or cry about those girls. The centre was about 80% black kids who had come from everywhere. They were lonely, rebellious, funny, restless, and hopelessly poor. What they were offered in the way of education was humiliating to me, some rooms with typewriters, and a machine that spoke to them as they typed. Most of them wanted to make movies when they met us. It was a corporate pacification programme. I wanted to do my own film about them. I was sorry—so was Sylvia—to see all their swearing and astounding wit cut out of the final version.
In a film like ***Hand Tinting,*** *how much of your concern is just working with form, or how important is your subject? I'm trying to think of showing this film to my class of women, and to think of the way that they as women would understand that film, women who aren't interested in art or film.*
It could be interesting to them to know that I dyed the film with cloth dyes and punctured it with my sewing needles.
The images that you used as well . . .
When I first did it, I thought it might not be useful to anyone. It was a poem. There's nothing out of the way in it, it has mystery and rhythm and some repetitive portraits of some beautiful faces. The editing and the girls are the subject of **Hand Tinting.** The editing and the so-called subject matter are equal. You can look at the editing or you can look at the girls. Just as in **Reason Over Passion,** you can look at the permutations, the images, listen to the beeps, or count on the flag inserts—or, just let it happen.
Well, the feeling I got at the beginning of ***Reason Over Passion****—I went through a gradual transition from the feeling that was there when everyone in the room spoke at once and a friend of mine said this is my home town. We felt very strongly that we were watching* Canada. *Then gradually all the elements of the film come together more. But at first it's a very strong surge of feelings for what you're looking at.*

archive 2021

Yes, it starts off much more stridently and clearer than the passages of the second half, where it gets into an episodic long white fade.

There's a credit at the end for Computer Photographic Planning. What was that?

Hollis Frampton, who is a wonderful filmmaker, devised a simple and inexpensive method of photographing all 537 permutations of **Reason Over Passion**. I couldn't afford to use an animation stand. And so he invented a machine-like masking device whereby each permutation was photographed very rapidly on a set-up in his dark-room . . . perfect and simple.

*How often has **Reason Over Passion** been shown and reviewed?*

It was premiered in Canada at the National Arts Centre in 1969 and in New York at Jonas Mekas' Christmas Festival in 1969. Then I showed it at the Museum of Modern Art. After that it was taken to Cannes for the Directors Fortnight. Then it sat in New York. It had a few write-ups in Italy and Holland. It's been shown at universities in the U.S. It had a good response in Canada; there have been quite a few pieces written on it and in the last few months it's been written about in the U.S. and France. The CBC and BBC wanted to show parts of it, but after projecting it, found that the four-times-removed printings in it were too difficult to transmit. They are afraid people will blame them for the grain — grain is dirt in their eyes.

You're very important as a woman *artist, because you take what women do and make your art out of that. Is that a conscious thing, or have you just eventually come to it?*

It has become more of a conscious thing over the years. As I started being an artist I was influenced by many things, artists, etc., and by my husband, who influenced me not so much in style as in having my own well-developed outlook, philosophy and so on. I was on my way in a sense to becoming an artist's-wife type artist . . . until I got into looking around in history for female lines of influence. I read the lives and works of many many women, salonists, diarists, revolutionaries, etc. I started to invent myself as an artist. I saw only gradually that my husband's artistic concerns were not mine, although I loved Cezanne, Vermeer, etc. I still had to look into the lives of women who had made independent statements in their lives. In a sense my husband's great individuality and talents were a catalyst to my development. Eventually women's concerns, and my own femininity became my artist's territory.

And you've got this double-barrelled thing, being a woman and a Canadian—the underdog in nationality and in sex.

I think of Canada as female. All the art I've been doing or will be doing is about Canada. I may tend to overly identify with Canada.

Do you see this artist's territory that you've staked out opening out to other women besides you?

Sure, why not. I would like to see them in that space, just as much as I would like to see us gain control of our government from the U.S.—or the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

In the past you have involved other people in your art works, women embroidering, knitting for you, etc.

Yes, in my recent exhibition at the National Gallery—True Patriot Love—I fulfilled a lot of plans that I've had in my last few years for having other people work on parts of the art works.

Does that sort of participatory art carry over to the films?

Not very much in my past personal films. But in my next film, **True Patriot Love,** there will be people working on costumes, music etc.

Do the women who worked on your recent work, do they do anything themselves in art, or did you find them because they were good craftswomen?

They were craftswomen who were doing good work, who have won many prizes in their fields.

Did working on your things inspire them to do more themselves?

Yes, it got a couple of women going on to working more original pieces. Less to do with traditional patterns. And on Canadian themes too!

Are there any women, living or dead, that you've been able to find sources from, or is it more of a general source?

There are quite a few, generally and especially . . . women from different periods in France, Pompadour, Collette, Madame Roland, the diarists, Salonists, mistresses, etc . . . English writers—Austen, the Bronte's, Beatrix Potter. Fictional women like Stendhal's heroines. These people all have had a sustaining influence on me. And also Adele Davis . . . and my mother-in-law, Marie Antoinette Levesque, who is French Canadian and after whom the character Eulalie de Chicoutimi is drawn in my projected feature film, **True Patriot Love.**

How about the gerbils? I'm trying to find out more and more how the question of women's art affects your work. Is **Rat Life and Diet in North America** *a generally political film, or do you see this as having any connection with women?*

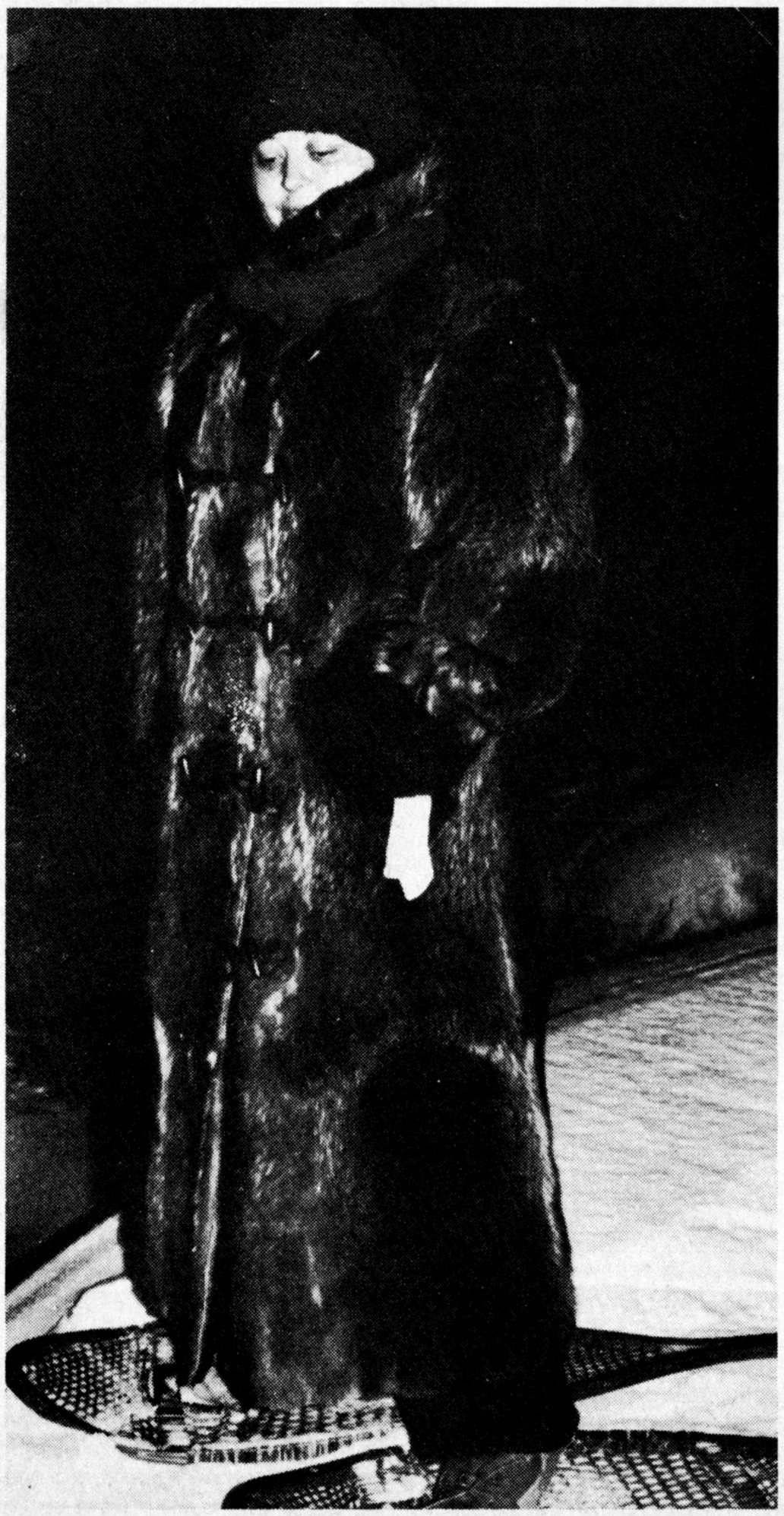
It has to do with women in a way. It was a domestic epic made on my kitchen table with my pets who were gerbils, and my cats too. It's also a political film. But it all came about from reading an article in *Scientific American* about rat behaviour under crowded conditions, simulating New York conditions. The film has very little to do with that, however.

You mentioned before that the gerbils were family animals.

Yes. Well I had lived with them for a long time and found their little family structure very interesting. These little creatures whose lives were lived inside the glass container. One of the many interesting things about them was their acute reaction to sound—their lives were literally ruled by sounds. They were haunted little characters, little prisoners, little victims no matter how nicely they were treated. They were wild creatures . . . and after photographing them for several months, I started to see what the film was about: their escape to freedom.

How do these concerns—women, Canada—work in **Reason Over Passion**?

Reason Over Passion is part three in a series of art works. The first two were a pair of bilingual quilted wall hangings. The words Reason Over Passion and La Raison Avant La Passion attached in big stuffed letters. But in the film **Reason Over Passion,** in making this film and particularly while editing I had the fantasy that I was a government propagandist, churning out the government line. I thought I was Leni Reifenstahl . . . you know . . . **Triumph of the Will** and **Reason Over Passion.** But I put Trudeau in the middle of my



film almost as an exercise . . . similar in a way to male artists always having had their odalisque, throughout the history of art and in their films, as stars.

Do you think of it as a process of objectification of Trudeau, in the way that women have always been objectified in movies?

You mean like what they did to Marilyn Monroe? No, I guess what I'm doing to Trudeau is putting him on for his statement "Reason over passion—that is the theme of all my writings". Taking the words Reason Over Passion in the beginning of the film, treating them as a propaganda slogan, and through permutation, turning them into visual poetry, into a new language.

If you were doing that to Trudeau, how do you feel about that sequence where you photograph yourself singing "O Canada"? Didn't you do that in **Water Sark** *also?*

Yes, I used the same idea in **Water Sark** as in **Reason Over Passion** of photographing myself—talking, making faces, etc. This idea makes the audience aware of the filmmaker and especially in **Water Sark,** where the whole film is about me making the film. In **Reason,** the self-portrait says I predict, I make the film, I am a character in the film. The whole film is a bit of a primer on Canada and my singing lends a quality of a dutiful school child flogging the anthem. And as I carefully sing the words, my camera is beneath my chin photographing, mostly the lower part of my face, and especially the lips. This soundless singing is the overture to the film. Almost announcing the death of the country, which is what this film is partly about—a last look at Canada.

What are the films correctives to?

That's the title of my film company. It was very funny to me when I thought of it 7 years ago. Since then we put the Corrective Film logo on all of my films. A lot of people have wondered what a corrective film would be.

Are you involved with this group of women filmmakers in New York?

No, I didn't know they existed until there was something about it in the *Village Voice,* and it said there was going to be a Feminist Film Festival.

Yes, that's all I know about it too so far. Have you worked with other women filmmakers?

I worked with Shirley Clarke a couple of times. Once she was doing a film which dealt with Tim Leary. It was fun to do. And I don't know what became of it. I did photography for it. Then I worked on her film about André Vosnesensky, who seemed a bit of a jerk. Then later Mary Mitchell, the Canadian playwright, and myself decided to do a film on Norman Mailer. We have lots of footage of that boring neurotic existentialist. The best part is a conversation Mary has with Mailer. We got Normie pounding Freedman's head in, in Brooklyn Heights in front of his house—it looks like a typical vignette of U.S. social problems. Then Jane Bryant and I did a half-hour film on Ed Blair, the New York poet—it's not finished. Ed died three weeks after we did the final shooting of the film. He was such a wonderful poet, and would open his poetry readings with a singsong, choosing songs like "After the Ball is Over". In the four years since we did the shooting I haven't had a minute to even think of finishing it. In 1965 Betty Ferguson and I made a collage film called **Barbara's Blindness.** It's very funny, and is distributed through the New York Film-Makers Co-Op. Wendy Michener and I started a film about each other's lives about 8 months before she died. I hope to finish this film somehow.

A lot of women have had problems in film. It hasn't been easy for Shirley Clarke either. She should have had a few of the things that Agnès Varda got, or Chytalova for that matter. She should have gotten something out of Hollywood. She's equal to Varda and Chytalova. But what an absolutely brutal scene to try and raise money from.

Have you gone through the same sort of struggles?

No, not the same in the U.S. But after I made **Reason Over Passion,** my first long film, I was made to feel in no uncertain terms by a few male filmmakers that I had overstepped my place, that in New York my place was making little films.

Do you think it's a different problem in underground films, or do they parallel the problems of women making ordinary feature films?

I don't know. I guess it's just a general problem.

Have you had trouble raising money for your films?

I have only raised money for one film. The rest I paid for myself, by sales of my art works. And I had a grant to do one film.

I think that Sylvia Spring talks about her problems in raising money; that seemed to have a lot to do with the fact that she is a woman.

Well everyone knows what she went through, but it's amazing that she finally got the money. I guess only two or three women have ever made a feature film in Canada, and up until the last few years, men

have successfully kept women out of filmmaking at the National Film Board.

Do you have any hope for women artists getting together, like at the Whitney last year?

Well I don't know about last year. I heard they threw their tampax around the Whitney and that they wanted Nancy Graves' sculpture removed because they thought a man had done it. But they were right too in some ways. Books dealing with women's problems like *Sisterhood is Powerful* are the most unifying of all. They just turn your head right around overnight. You feel differently, you just aren't the same after those books.

Do you feel that coming back to Canada will ease problems or create new ones?

Well you see in New York I've become part of a movement called Structural Films. This movement involves seven people and has evolved over the last four years. I've given a lot, and learned a lot from these filmmakers, and I don't like to leave that scene but I have to, to go on with what I'm about. My subject matter has been bringing me back to Canada for a long time. I've been thinking and working and researching for the feature film I want to do.

What's it about?

It's a film about Tom Thomson, the Canadian landscape painter. It involves Quebec and Ontario, and his fictional lover Eulalie de Chicoutimi. It deals with the French and English language and is a play on subtitles. It's about the last days of a great country, and is placed around 1919, the days before Canada lost control of its destiny. Dennis Reid, a curator at the National Gallery, has done extensive research on Tom Thomson, and has been able to give me much more understanding of this great artist who is so much the spirit of Canada as she was. His information has enabled me to go on with scripting this film.

Do you think there will be any change in the way you'll treat Canada now that you are here?

No, because I've been on this path a long time. I wrote the outline for this film two years ago in New York.

Will ***True Patriot Love*** *be an avant garde film?*

That's complicated. I have made nine short films in the last seven years, all of which could be termed avant garde, and three of which are considered to be Structural Cinema. These personal films mean more to me than any of the documentaries I've worked on. Films like **Catfood, 1933, Sailboat,** are all working in new areas of seeing and thinking. But **Rat Life and Diet in North America** contains the seed of something else. It had a message and a very accessible story. It was bought by German and Netherlands Television, and was shown on the Canadian network. After it was shown on Canadian TV people I know or didn't know told me how much they liked it, including a man who drove a truck for Pepsi Cola, whom I met at the Pilot Tavern. He offered to invest $100.00 in my next film. I was so knocked out! After making **Reason Over Passion,** I wrote the outline for **True Patriot Love,** which is a traditional narrative film. It will be a well-researched, tragi-comic historical love story.

Kay Armatage teaches a course on women at the University of Toronto, is a regular contributor to Take One, *and co-editor of this issue.*

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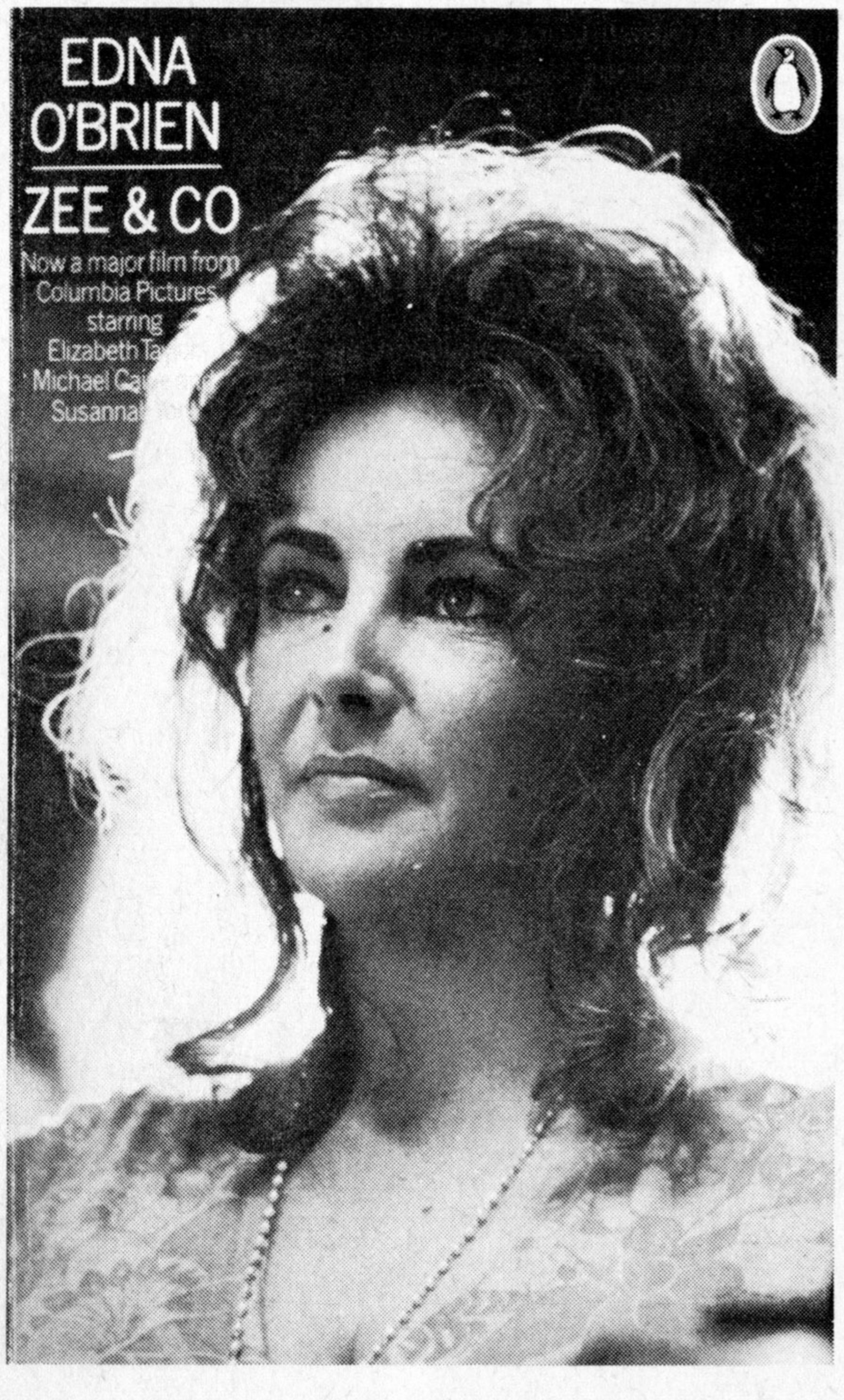

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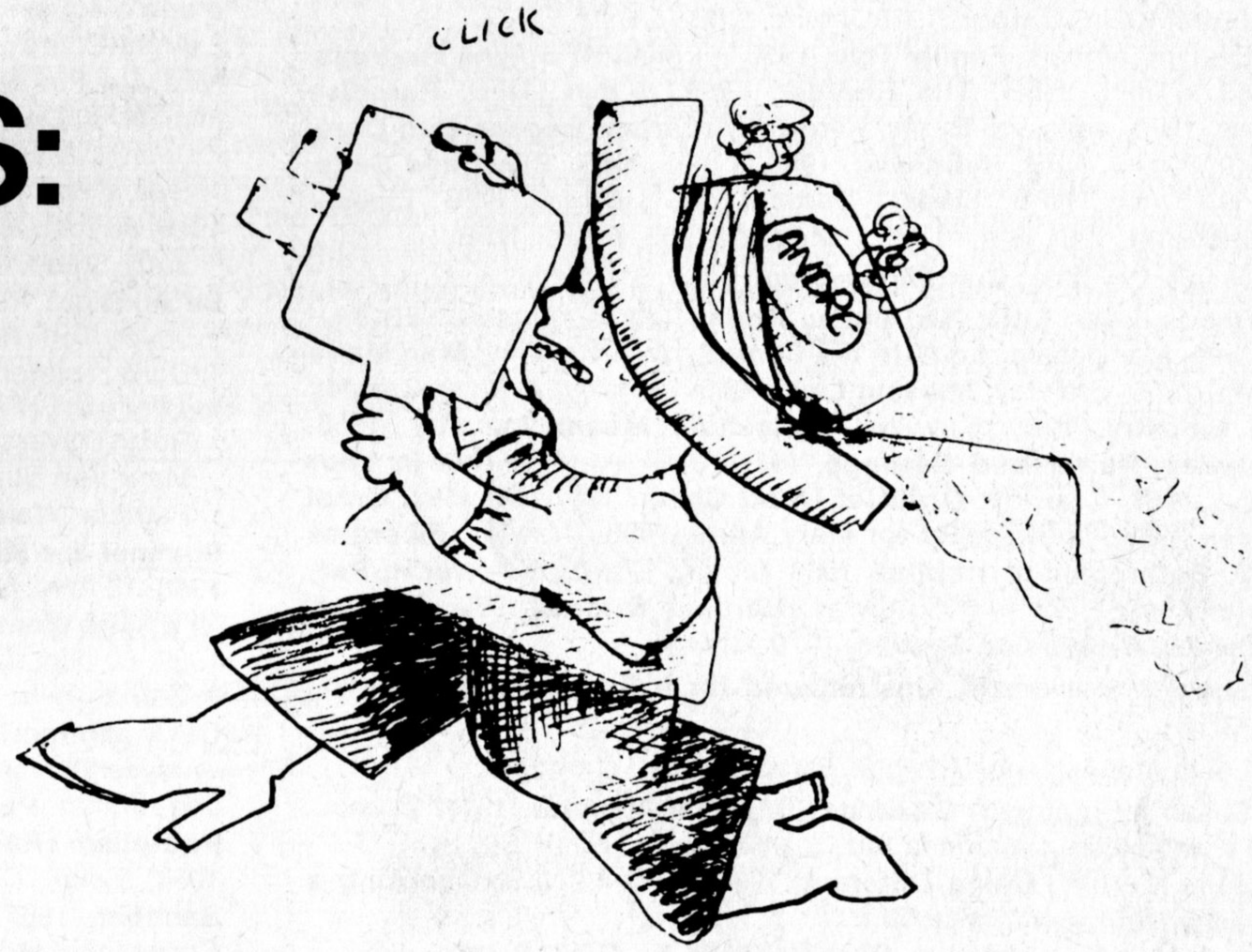

A FILMOGRAPHY

Drawings by Joyce Wieland

compiled by Alison Reid

The research apparatus for a project of this kind did not exist previous to the Canadian Film Institute's invaluable *Film Canadiana*. Thus I have also relied heavily on material solicited directly from the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and various production companies. Consequently the filmography must be somewhat incomplete. Additions to the list are encouraged so that it may eventually be as comprehensive as possible.

Susanne Angel: **Legault's Place**, 1964, 10 min., NFB.

Nancy Archibald: **Point Pelee**, 1971, 28 min., CBC.

Tanya Ballantyne: **The Merry-Go-Round**, 1966, 23 min., NFB; **The Things I Cannot Change**, 1966, 55 min., NFB.

Bianca Barnes: **Yesterday**, 10 min., ind.

Sara Bezaire (w. Burton Rubenstein): **The Hyacinth Child's Bedtime Story**, 1967, 22 min., ind.

Myra Changar: **The Neighbourhood**, 1968, 18 min., ind.

Louise Chénier: **Appleorange Tree**, 1969, 9 1/2 min., ind.

Aimée Danis: **Maryse, pile ou face**, 1969, 30 min., Onyx; **Québec An 2000**, 1969, 10 min., Onyx; **KW+**, 1970, 14 min., Onyx; **La Croix du Mont-Royal**, 1971, 60 min., Onyx; **L'Evadé**, 1971, 60 min., Onyx; **L'Adieu au Lys**, 1971, 60 min., Onyx.

Mireille Dansereau: **Moi, un jour**, 1966, 10 min., ind.; **Compromise**, 1968, 28 min., ind.; **Forum**, 1969, 58 min., ind.; **La Vie rêvée** (unfinished), 1971, feature, Association cooperative des productions audio-visuelles.

Barbara Davis: **Bucking Facts**, 1970, 8 min., British Columbia Forest Service.

Francine Desbiens: **Le Corbeau et le renard**, 1969, 3 min., NFB; **Les Bibites de Chromagnon**, 1971; 8 min., NFB.

Mary di Tursi: **Apollo Eleven - Quick Look**. 1969, 27 min., Jack Chisolm Film Productions.

Alma Duncan: **Folksong Fantasy**, 1951, 7 min., NFB; (w. Audrey McLaren): **Kumak the Sleepy Hunter**, 1953, 13 min., Dunclaren.

J. Eglington: **Kimi**, ind.

Viviane Elnécavé: **Notre jeunesse en auto sport**, 1969, 3 min., NFB.

Michèle Favreau: **Biologie** (unfinished), feature.

Joan Fiore: **Home Movies**, 1969, 60 min., CBC.

Monique Fortier: **La Beauté même**, 1964, 10 min., NFB.

Beryl Fox: **One Million Shoes; The Single Woman and the Double Standard; Balance of Terror,** Talent Associates Paramount; **Summer in Mississippi**, 1964, 27 min., CBC; **Viet Nam: The Mills of the Gods**, 1965, 54 min., CBC; **Youth: In Search of Morality**, 1966, 60 min., CBC; **Measure of Morality**, CBC; **Last Reflections on a War**, 1968, 44 min., PBL and CBC; **Be a Man - Sell out!**, 1969, 60 min., CTV: **North with the Spring**, 1970, 60 min., CTV; (w. Douglas Leiterman): **One More River**, 1963, 58 min., Allan King Associates; **The Chief**, 1963, 50 min., CBC.

Suzanne Gervais-L'Heureux: **Cycle**, 1971, 4 min., NFB.

Joan Henson: **Origami**, 1967, 8 min., NFB; **Standing Buffalo**, 1968 23 min., NFB; **Bing Bang Boom**, 1969, 24 min., NFB; **Jackie Burroughs**, ind.

Mai Hoskin: **Sunset**, 3 min., ind.

Isobel Kehoe: **The St. Lawrence Seaway**, 1959, 29 min., NFB.

Bonny Klein: **Encounter at Kwacha House - Halifax**, 1967, 17

Alison Reid works for the Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa.

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min., NFB; **Encounter with Saul Alinsky Part I: CYC Toronto**, 1967, 29 min., NFB; **Encounter with Saul Alinsky Part II: Rama Indian Reserve**, 1967, 32 min., NFB; **Pow Wow at Duck Lake**, 1967, 14 1/2 min., NFB; **Little Burgundy**, 1968, 30 min., NFB; **People and Power**, 1968 17 1/2 min., NFB; **Deciding to Organize**, 1968, 34 min., NFB; **Building an Organization**, 1968, 38 min., NFB; **Through Conflict to Negotiation**, 1968, 46 min., NFB; **A Continuing Responsibility**, 1968, 43 min., NFB.

Judith Klein: **Catuor**, 1970, 4 min., NFB.

Evelyn Lambart: **Family Tree**, 1950, 14 min., NFB; **Fine Feathers**, 1968, 5 min., NFB; **The Hoarder**, 1969, 8 min., NFB; **Paradise Lost**, 1970, 4min., NFB; (w. Norman McLaren): **Begone Dull Care**, 1949, 8 min., NFB; **Rythmetic**, 1956, 9 min., NFB; **Short and Suite**, 1959, 5 min., NFB; **Lines - Vertical**, 1961, 6 min., NFB; **Lines - Horizontal**, 1961, 6 min., NFB; **Mosaic**, 1965, 5 min., NFB.

Nicole Lavallée: **Conditionnement**, 1969, 2 1/2 min., ind.

Rhoda Leyer: **Little Red Riding Hood**, 1968, 5 1/2 min., NFB.

Sally MacDonald: **Look to the Centre**, 1954, Crawley; **Man Made Rain**, 1955, Crawley; **Missing Link**, 1955, Crawley; **A River Creates an Industry**, 1955, Crawley; **Agriculture Means Industry**, 1956, Crawley; **Power and Passage**, 1956, Crawley; **Put This in Your Pipe**, 1957, Crawley; **Order of Good Cheer**, 1957, Crawley; **Great River**, 1959, Crawley; **Rx for Mary Anne**, 1963, Crawley; **Fiberglas R.P. Bathrooms at Habitat**, 1967, 6 min., Crawley; **Power in Perpetuity**, 1967, 21 min., Crawley; **Harbour Bridge**, 1969, Crawley; **DDH-280 Propulsion System**, 1970, Crawley.

Shelagh Mackenzie: **Unstructured for a Summer**, 1969, 8 min., NFB.

Lucie Ménard and Monique Paradis: **Elles**, short, ind.

Susan Murgatroyd: **Genetics - Man the Creator**, 1971, 21 min., CTV and Hobel-Leiterman Ltd.

Julia Murphy: **Being Different**, 1957, 10 min., NFB; **Choosing a Leader**, 1957, 8 1/2 min., NFB.

Lise Noiseux-Labreque: **Père Noël U.S.A.**, 1968, 10 min., J.C.L.

Suzanne Olivier: **Des ensembles**, 1971, 4 min., NFB.

Maryka Omatsu: **S.O.B.**, 1968, 7 min., ind.; **Moon Maiden**, 1969, 10 min., ind.

Margaret Perry: **Glooscap Country**, 1961, 13 min., Nova Scotia Travel Bureau; **Nova Scotia Byways**, 1963, 13 min., Nova Scotia Dept. of Trade and Industry; **Tides of Fundy**, 1965, 15 min., Nova Scotia Travel Bureau; **Blessing on the Woods**, 12 1/2 min., Nova Scotia Travel Bureau; **Bluefin Rodeo**, 10 min.; **The Cape Islander**, 14 min.; **Marine Highway**, 14 min.; **Old New Scotland**, 12 min.;**The Royal Province**, 20 1/2 min.; **Wildlife Rendezvous**, 14 min.

Raymonde Pilon (w. Guy Beaugrande-Champagne): **Aspects d'une discussion en groupe**, 1967, 31 min., NFB.

Anne-Claire Poirier: **Trente Minutes M. Plummer**, 1963, 28 min., NFB; **La Fin des étés**, 1964, 28 min., NFB; **Les Ludions**, 1965, 23 min., NFB; **De mère en fille**, 1967, 75 min., NFB.

Jean Richards: **The Search**, 1968, 16 min., ind.

Sylvia Spring: **Madeleine**, 1969, 14 min., ind.; **Madeleine is . . .**, 1970, 88 min., Spring Release Ltd.—Glenn Warren Productions.

Judy Steed: **Clowns and Monsters**, 1971, 8 min., ind.; **It's Gonna Be All Right**, 1971, 80 min., ind.

Joyce Teff: **Rita Letendre**, 12 min., ind.; **Hugh Leroy**, 18 min., ind.

Doris Toukermine: **Contemporary Pictures Itself**, 1968, 16 min., ind.

Roxy Travers: **Palatial Ambiguities**, ind.

Mary Van Stolk: **Ronnie**, 28 min.; **Battered Children**, CBC.

Patricia Watson: **Every Second Car**, 1964, 27 min., NFB; **The Summer We Moved to Elm Street**, 1966, 28 min., NFB; **The Purse**, 1966, 12 min., NFB; **The Invention of the Adolescent**, 1967, 27 min., NFB; **The Admittance**, 1968, 43 min., NFB; **Death and Mourning**, 1969, 60 min., Canadian Educational Programs.

Gloria White: **Battle of the Windmill**, 1970, 28 1/2 min., META and CBC; **Immigration: Destination Toronto**, 1970, 28 1/2 min.

Joyce Wieland: **Larry's Recent Behaviour**, 1963, 18 min., Corrective Films; **Peggy's Blue Skylight**, 1964, 17 min., Corrective; **Patriotism (Part I)**, 1964, 15 min., Corrective; **Patriotism (Part II)**, 1964, 5 min., Corrective; **Water Sark**, 1964-65, 14 min., Corrective; **Sailboat**, 1967-68, 3 1/2 min., Corrective; **1933**, 1967-68, 4 min., Corrective; **Hand-Tinting**, 1967-68, 4 min., Corrective; **Catfood**, 1968, 13 min., Corrective; **Rat Life and Diet in North America**, 1968, 14 min., Corrective; **La Raison Avant la Passion**, 1967-69, 90 min., Corrective; (w. Michael Snow): **Dripping Water**, 1969, 10 min., ind.

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1939	WUTHERING HEIGHTS	LAWRENCE OLIVIER MERLE OBERON DAVID NIVEN
1940	RAFFLES	OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND DAVID NIVEN DAME MAY WHITTY
1946	THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES	FREDRIC MARCH MYRNA LOY TERESA WRIGHT
1948	THE BISHOP'S WIFE	CARY GRANT LORETTA YOUNG DAVID NIVEN
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IT ONLY HAPPENS TO OTHERS

Produced by Films 13/Claude Lelouche. Written and directed by Nadine Marquand Trintignant. Cast: Catherine Deneuve, Marcello Mastroianni, Serge Marquand.

It Only Happens to Others is a film produced by box-office smasher Claude Lelouche, starring Marcello Mastroianni and Catherine Deneuve—"together for the first time". It was written and directed by Nadine Marquand Trintignant, wife of actor Jean Louis Trintignant. It is a carefully shot, sincere film in beautiful color. Miss Deneuve has, as always, never been more beautiful. All of this would seem to guarantee the film for a glossy art house. But, in fact, it opened (in Boston) at one of those slightly suspect grade-B theatres, not a genuine skin flick house, but one that never shows even a first run Hollywood film, let alone a European import. Something, needless to say, has gone slightly wrong with the film somewhere along the line.

It Only Happens to Others deals with what might traditionally be thought to be "a woman's theme"—the loss of a child—although in this case it is clearly equally the loss of both man and woman. It is frankly and bravely autobiographical. A couple's baby dies (as did the child of Nadine and Jean Louis Trintignant) and they subsequently rent an apartment into which they retreat for weeks of isolation and insanity. Eventually, they emerge from their isolation at a country wedding, which forms the last, metaphoric scene of the film.

Interestingly, the film contains oblique clues which are symbolic vestiges of the autobiographical truth of the situation. For instance, Mastroianni cuts his hair in the style of Jean Louis Trintignant's at one point in the film. (Shades of **Contempt**, in which Brigitte Bardot dons a wig that was Anna Karina's hair style in **Vivre Sa Vie**). Nadine Trintignant's own brother, Serge Marquand, plays Deneuve's film brother. Physically, he is miscast. By no stretch of the imagination could Marquand be the brother of Deneuve. And yet, he is totally touching and vital in the role. Part of this impact is due to his odd function as a link between life and art, playing the same supporting role in the movie as he played in life.

Deneuve and Mastroianni, as the couple, are called by their own first names, Catherine and Marcello, further confusing reality and fiction. The stars are required to play a duet tour de force. Throughout the film they are almost never off screen and receive only occasional relief from supporting actors. Obviously it is a labor of love; one feels the intimacy of the company that made the film. These members of the European film community help to expiate the director's grief by acting out her story. In this sense, **It Only Happens to Others** serves as a sort of group therapy and catharsis. This is a bold and fascinating direction for film to explore.

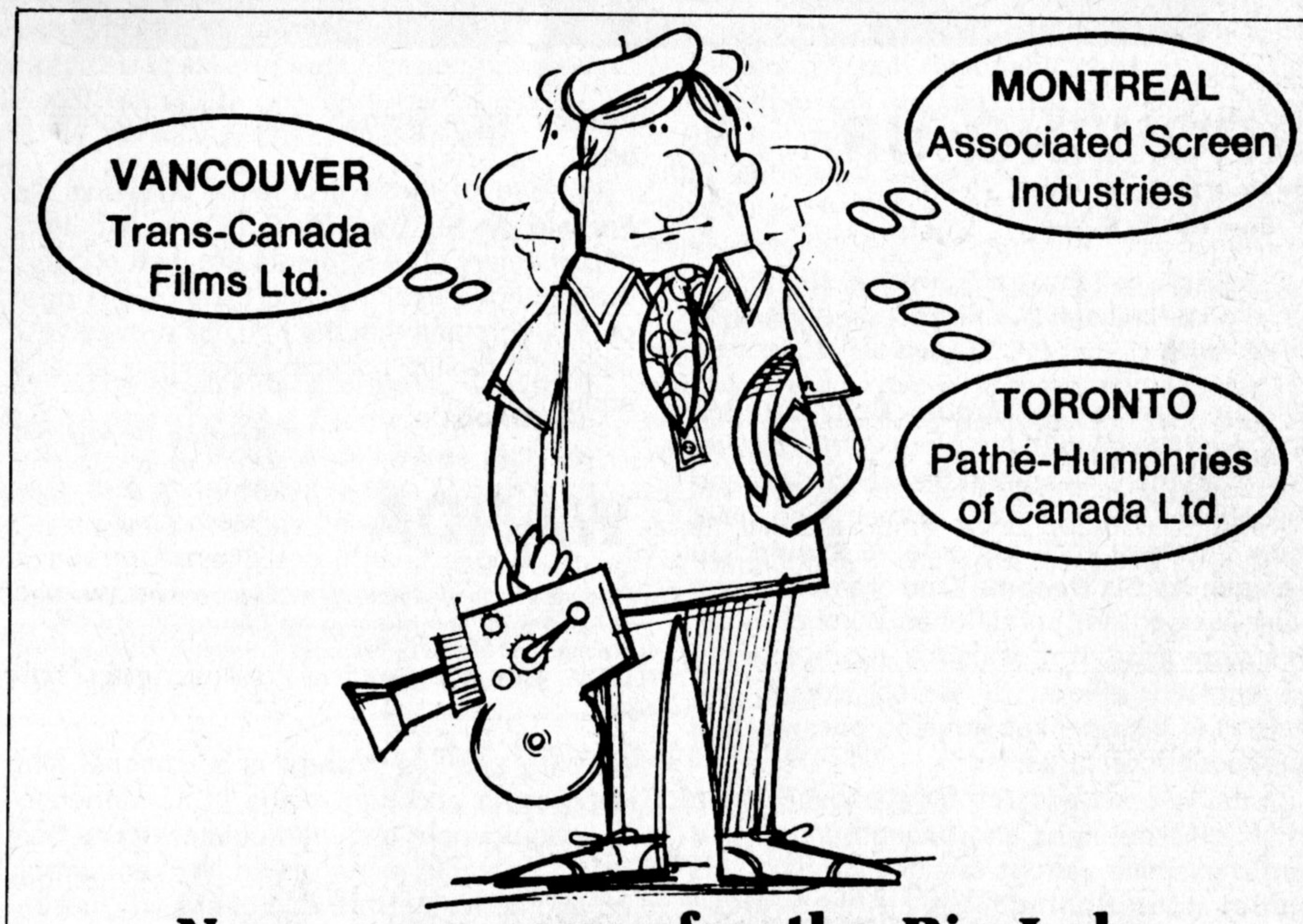
One magnificently successful scene has Catherine and Marcello placed full face in front of the camera, getting drunk and dancing, alone in their apartment. They become sexually excited and finally reject sexuality for grief. The actors generate the immediacy of improvisation. The other highly successful scene is the final wedding sequence which employs beautifully thought-out camera movement and color. There is one long halting, swooping pan shot over the wedding guests that is rhythmically near perfect.

Unfortunately, the film perches dangerously on the border of melodrama and occasionally it strays across, as in the scene of the baby's death at the hospital. The scene achieves discomfort while reaching for tragedy. The basic difficulty of the scene is done a further disservice in English by soap-operatic dialogue and one of the most classically lousy dubbing jobs that I have heard. God help those nameless, uncredited and incredible American voices who had the job of playing Deneuve's and Mastroianni's voices. I hope Nadine Trintignant never hears how her soundtrack runs in America. The hospital scene is a particularly blatant example: fragments of the original, beautifully constructed soundtrack with Deneuve's sobs and the muffled sounds of hospital corridors on it, break through the flat overlayed dubbing track.

I would like to like the film more than I ultimately do, particularly for its fine pictorial quality and acting, and above all, because it is a deeply personal and honest expression by a woman. But somehow, the parts don't quite add up to a whole. An uneven film with some touching and revealing moments.

Susan Woll

Susan Woll works out of Boston and has previously reviewed films for Take One.



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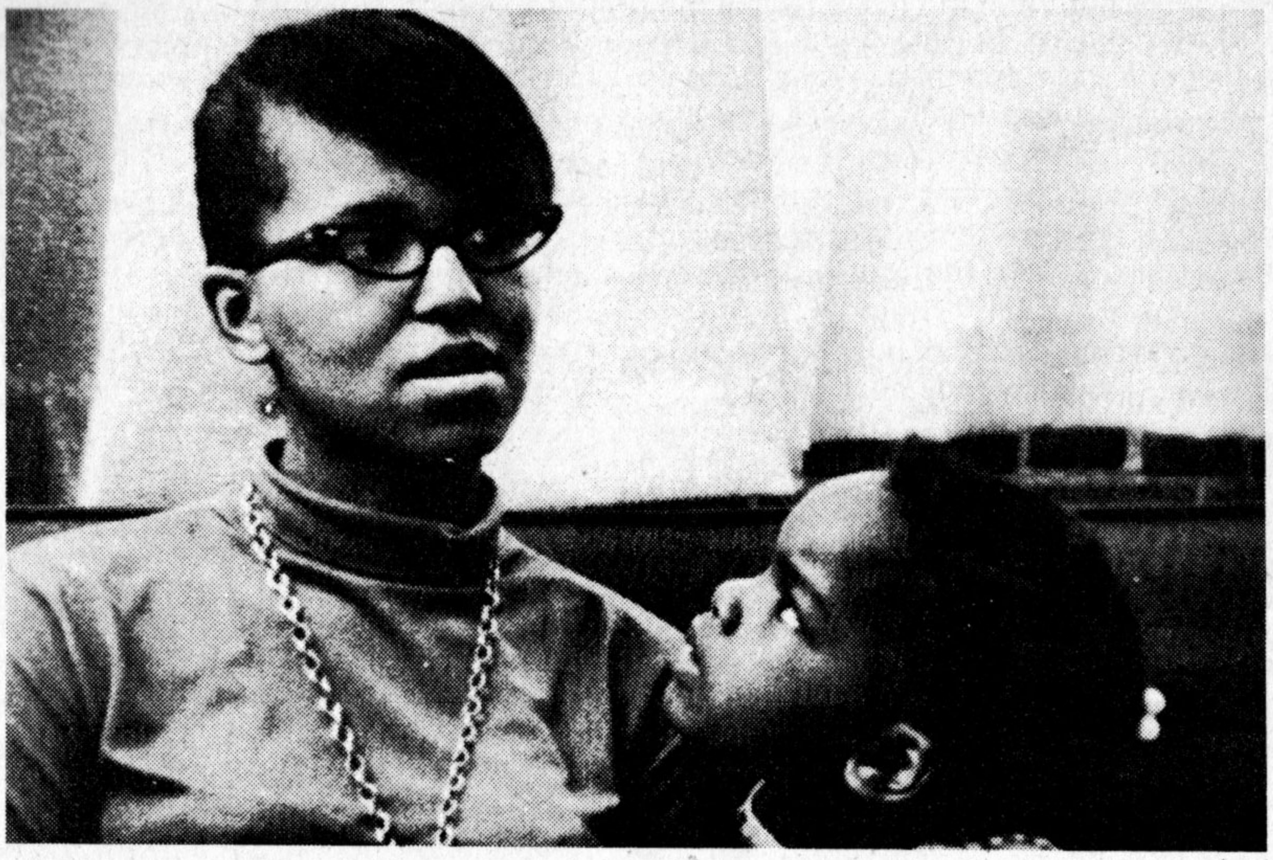

GROWING UP FEMALE

Produced by New Day Films. 1971. B & W. Directed and edited by Julia Reichert and Jim Klein. Photographed by James Medalia.

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan shattered the myth of the glorified housewife, revealing the widespread dissatisfaction and resentment felt by many women who have been pushed into this role. **Growing Up Female: As Six Become One** dramatizes the ways women are conditioned by society for this stereotype. It reveals the subtle and not so subtle methods by which women are trained to become subservient, passive, and dependent creatures.

Julia Reichert and Jim Klein chose women of six different ages and backgrounds in order to examine various manifestations of this social conditioning. They filmed these women in their own environments: at school, with friends, working, or caring for their children. In addition to the women themselves, the filmmakers also interviewed people who had had an important influence on their lives: parents, teachers, employers, and even an advertising executive.

In the different episodes the filmmakers matched their shooting style to the ages of their subjects. In the nursery school sequence most of the shots are hand-held, expressing the spontaneity and confusion of childhood. The camerawork gets increasingly steadier as the film progresses, just as people become more restrained with age.

Difficulties in shooting the film reflect some of the problems portrayed on the screen. According to the filmmakers, Julia was to call the shots, but the cameraman often ignored her instructions. She had to relay many of her directions through Jim Klein, whom the cameraman would obey. In Tammy's bedroom interview the cameraman kept pointing the camera at her low-cut blouse. At a crucial moment, when she expressed the importance of freedom in her life, instead of shooting a close-up of her face, he held the camera on her breasts. When asked why he did it, he replied that he thought freedom for a woman meant not wearing a bra!

In spite of these problems, **Growing Up Female: As Six Become One** is an excellent documentary. The subjects are well chosen, the editing is exciting, and the music is right on. I understand that the film has proved very useful for raising consciousness in a general audience.

Kristina Nordstrom

Kristina Nordstrom is the Director of the New York Festival of Women's Films.

WANDA

Produced by the Foundation for Filmmakers of New York, 1970. Written and directed by Barbara Loden. Photographed and edited by Nicholas T. Proferes. Cast: Barbara Loden, Michael Higgens, Frank Jourdano, Valerie Manches.

Barbara Loden's **Wanda** is a personal film, depressing and convincing in its authenticity, about a poor and inarticulate woman from a Pennsylvania mining town. Written, directed and acted by Barbara Loden, who has imbedded the ugly details of mining life deeply into the story and settings, the film avoids the Hollywood sentimentality often found in the films of her husband, Elia Kazan.

There are some technical problems with the movie, though. The colour blow-up from 16 to 35mm causes the grain to come to life and dance in front of the viewers' eyes, and makes the zoom shots appear strangely extreme. But, except for these defects, everything in the movie is right.

Even the name "Wanda" is right. The U.S. is full of Wandas whose parents tried to give them pretty names, one of the few things they could do to leave their children with something less dreary than just the example of their own poor and dead-end lives — their Wanda's real legacy. And it is Loden's great contribution that she is able to bring together so forcefully and coherently the reasons why Wanda's life will be a dead-end as well, since Wanda is not only stupid and unimaginative but her life surroundings and her poverty are deadening, and the fact of being a woman makes her doubly subject to exploitation and to remaining trapped in a dismal mining town, the men of her age with any spirit having long since sped out of town in their hot rods, headed for Chicago or New York.

Loden shows us the depressing surroundings at the outset with opening shots of a run-down bungalow at the edge of an open coal mining pit, and we hear the relentless sound of a bulldozer in the pit as a family awakens, their tiny house full to the bursting point with adults and children, Wanda having spent the night as a guest sleeping on the couch.

We soon learn in a marvelously cold courtroom scene that Wanda's husband is divorcing her and asking for custody of the children. She appears in court wearing pants and with her hair in rollers, and agrees tonelessly but without hesitation to relinquish the children. We know only generally from the dialogue between the husband and the judge that Wanda is a "bad wife and mother."

Since Wanda lacks both the ability and the wider life experiences to discern why being only a wife and mother should not be a totally satisfying life, she falls back on a traditional explanation, already imposed on her from outside. When she has finally found her way out of town with a sadistic, pill-popping criminal, she says to him in a moment of reflection, "I guess I'm just no good," and this self-appraisal is deceptively liberating for a short time. It explains to her why she prefers being on the road with this man to marriage and child-rearing. But it's deceptive because rather that freeing her it further limits her possibilities, and at the end of the movie we see Wanda in the process of becoming the "honky-tonk" woman of country music infamy. Part prostitute, part bar-fly, Wanda will be completely trapped, Loden tells us, condemned to live from one jukebox song to the next, from one beer to the next, and from one contemptuous man to the next.

Brenda Roman

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SOME WOMEN'S FILMS

It's a sign of the times, I suppose, that everything — including the term "women's films" — must be redefined, recycled. The movie industry has traditionally viewed (along with the public) the "woman's picture" as nothing more than drivel in a wet hankie. **Portrait in Black, Magnificent Obsession, Written On the Wind** — these were women's pictures par excellence. Dreary ladies doing dreary things and emerging drearily from their suffering. There was some logic in developing this genre for, as denegrating as it was, it was simultaneously uplifting to the millions of women who crowded movie theatres to escape; to identify with and perhaps condescend to Lana Turner, Jane Wyman and Dorothy Malone as They Threaded Their Tragic Way through the Vale of Tears that Was Their Life. Things haven't changed that much. What is **Love Story** but a 'now' version of a 'then' tearjerker? We simply traded ill-starred youth for maudlin middle-age.

Ironically, **It Only Happens to Others**, a film directed by Nadine Trintignant, is another weary twang on the same old chord. The sappy qualities of this melodrama — a

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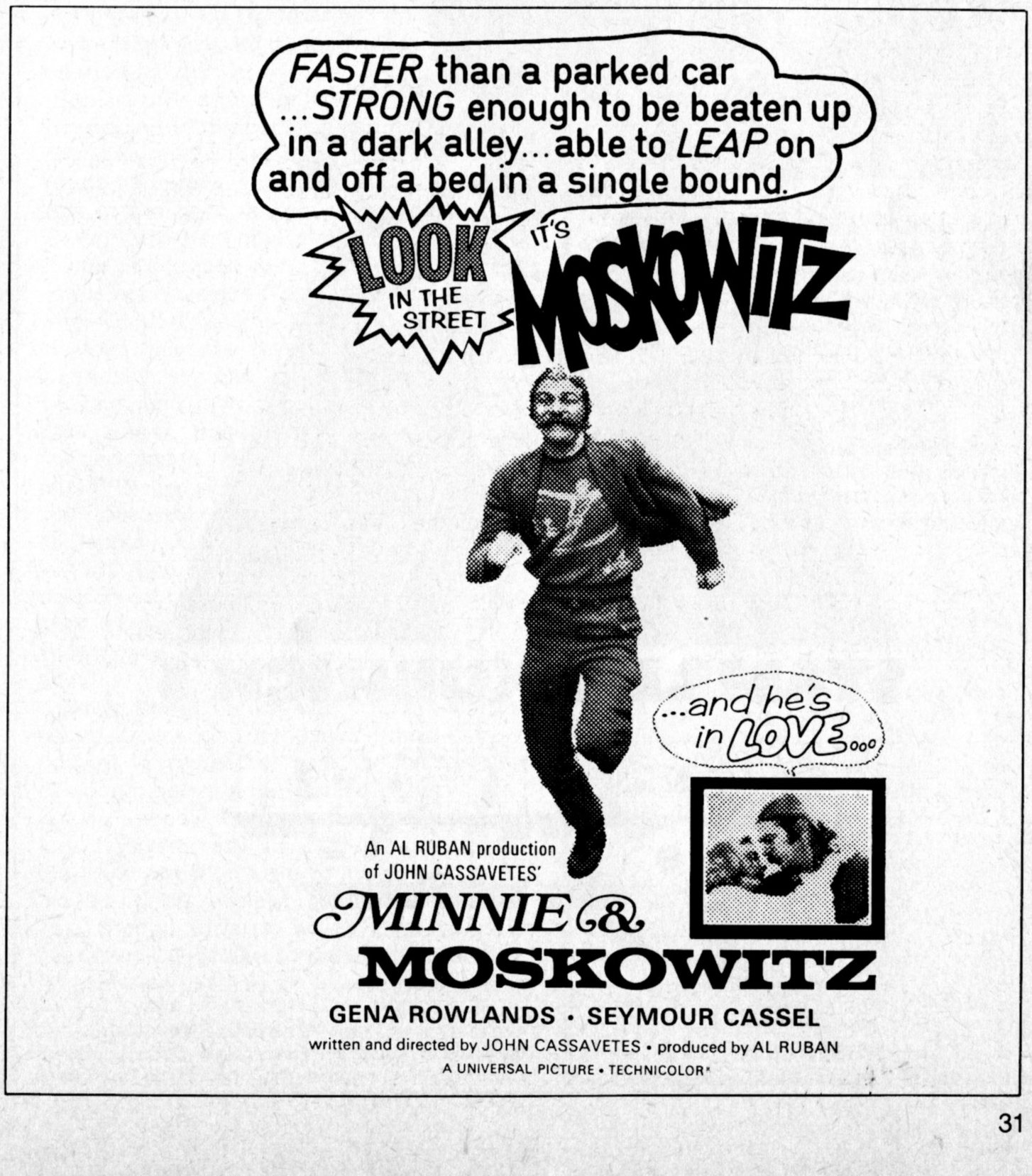
story about a couple (Catherine Deneuve and Marcello Mastroianni) whose infant child dies — are mitigated somewhat by the knowledge that Mme. Trintignant and her husband lost their own child, and that loss generated this therapeutic effort. As moving as this biographical data might be, it is finally incidental information and it seems to indicate that 'it only happens to auteurs.' We are left with the work itself despite its maker's good intentions. And I think this is the kind of movie that people go to as a kind of self-punishment — or at least they feel that way when they come out because Mme. Trintignant does not really use the 'event' of the film for anything but self-serving tragic purposes. She does not exploit (in the good sense of the word) the situation in any of the interesting ways that she might have — to investigate the effect of the tragedy on the relationship of the parents, to explore the consequences as they relate to intimate friends and family, to suggest the impact of this fateful happening in some larger philosophical sense. What we are presented with is scene after scene of Deneuve and Mastroianni mooning about and regarding one another wistfully. It is most unsettling for the viewer to feel apathy and finally irritation toward this couple who find themselves in genuinely pitiable circumstances. Although perverse, this in itself would have been an interesting experiment had it been Mme. Trintignant's intention, which I am sure it was not. If this film were to have been a successful "woman's film" in the new sense — which I suspect relates to a self-respecting point-of-view as much as anything else — then it might have focussed more specifically and more piercingly on the Deneuve character. No one, so far as I know, and certainly no woman has made a film that elaborates on the nature of a mother's love for an infant, and on the conflict that birth represents between husband and wife. **It Only Happens to Others** would have been an extraordinary opportunity to explore this very personal and universal theme; a theme made more complex by the ultimate loss of the child. Instead, Nadine Trintignant has chosen to do her therapy in the most conventional and disappointingly superficial terms. There is something depressing not only about the theme of this film, but about the implicit suggestion that women filmmakers, when given the rare opportunity, will continue to make "women's pictures" in the old-fashioned, demeaning sense.

It is interesting that in 1959 Agnès Varda explored the theme of pregnancy in very personal terms with her short film **L'Opéra mouffe** (Grove Press Films). Varda was pregnant herself when she made the film, and she explains it as an experiment in the abstract representations of the thoughts of a pregnant women. It is an early film, and it bears the influence of her background in still photography. Despite the splendid score of Georges Delarue, it does have the look of a student production, which it is in a sense. It also has some of the surreal qualities of the early Dali/Bunuel experiments, and some of the magic. Varda separates this 14 minute etude on the psychological states of pregnancy into several deceptively fragmented sections, which mesh conceptually once the entire film has been seen. With the segments "Du Sentiment de la Nature" and "De la Grossesse", Varda treats, briefly but significantly, the nature of the love that leads to pregnancy, and the ambivalence of the pregnant woman toward her physical state, her cumbersomeness. "Quelqu'uns" is a lively and humorous sequence concerning the looks received by a pregnant woman. "Les Choses Disparus" and "De L'Ivresse", the most expressionistic of the episodes, probe the mother's anxious speculations of the future of her child, and comment through images on the process of growing old. "Des Angoisses" has to do with the fears associated with childbirth, and "Des Envies" is a witty statement on the mother's 'cravings'. Although it is by no means a motion picture milestone, **L'Opéra mouffe** may be a classic in an unexpected sense — were a "woman's film movement" to develop. It is a film that could only have been made by a woman in that it is refreshingly chauvinistic and meaningful to other women, in that it is marked by a keeness of vision, an intellectual rigor and an originality of point-of-view that will hopefully characterize "women's films" in the new sense of that phrase.

T. R. Baskin is supposed to be a "woman's film" in the new sense. And as execrable as it is, it is significant because it is probably typical of how Hollywood will treat Women's Liberation — just as they treated the hot topics of Student Revolution (**The Strawberry Statement, Getting Straight**) and The Drug Problem (**The Panic In Needle Park, Dusty and Sweets McGee, Born to Win** and **Believe in Me**). Which is to say, with an unhealthy mixture of explicit contempt for the subject at hand and an implicit obeisance to existing institutions. It's a simple formula, but nothing works quite so well toward the defeat of noble sentiments as making the proponents of those principles odious personalities. (i.e. Elliott Gould and Michael Sarrazin). Candice Bergan's acting is so unfeeling as to set back any movement she might represent. I suppose that the makers of **T. R. Baskin** thought themselves revolutionary in centering their film around a heroine so feisty that she doesn't wear make-up, so individualistic that she dresses shabbily. (Peter Pan collars are the last word in eccentricity.) As we might expect, this new "women's vehicle" was written and directed by men — Peter Hyams and Herbert Ross. It is an ugly, foggily constructed film — Bergan plays a smugly flippant girl from the Midwest who seeks her fortune in Chicago, takes a job with a big corporation and tosses it the finger when no one is around to see, finds love and loses it, submits herself to a rendezvous in a hotel room with a paunchy, simple-minded but good-hearted Joe (Peter Boyle) so she can flashback her sad story. Aside from not making much sense, the movie is gaggy, self-conscious, predictable and heartless. It takes a lot of clumsiness to overcome the female audience's delight at finally having a "70's heroine" to identify with, but **T. R. Baskin** manages that counterfeat handily. I suspect that this is the first of a whole load of movies (or the continuation of an old line in new wrapping) about smug women who must be defeated by their own assertiveness. The only thing I find more disturbing than that is the fact that women — under the pressures of commercialism and big money — will turn out the same kind of thing.

Susan Rice


FASTER than a parked car
...STRONG enough to be beaten up in a dark alley...able to LEAP on and off a bed in a single bound.
LOOK IN THE STREET
IT'S MOSKOWITZ
...and he's in LOVE...
An AL RUBAN production of JOHN CASSAVETES'
MINNIE & MOSKOWITZ
GENA ROWLANDS • SEYMOUR CASSEL
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MAKE A FACE

Produced by Sperling Productions. 1971. Color. Produced and directed by Karen Sperling. Written by Karen Sperling and Barbara Connell. Photographed by Jeri Sopanen and Ken Van Sickle. Edited by Barbara Connell. 80 mins.

Apart from Susan Sontag's heavy (but at least not irrelevant) **Brother Carl,** woman directors were sadly represented at this year's London Film Festival with one entry, **Make A Face** by Karen Sperling.

Arlene Gould writes for Where To Go *(a London magazine) and is a previous contributor to* Take One.

Miss Sperling is the 26-year-old daughter of producer Milton Sperling and granddaughter of Harry Warner, which probably says a lot about how she got the money to make this film and why it was shown both here and at the Venice Film Festival this year.

As producer, director, co-writer and one-and-only star in **Make A Face,** Miss Sperling is disastrous.

"This is an experimental film," the program notes say, about a mixed-up rich girl coming apart in her Manhattan pad. But instead of an ad lib version of **Coming Apart** (one of the new-style exposés that I think really works), all we get is a deliberately naive, rich kid's voyeur movie that bores but never shocks. The film probably says a lot about Karen Sperling's own, dull world. But that is about as relevant as a documentary on Princess Anne as Sportswoman of the Year.

The heroine in **Make A Face** is supposed to be a sculptress. But did you ever meet an artist with clean, perfectly manicured nails? Since the film is supposed to be part horror, her pad is decked out with a groovy, long hall like the one Polanski used in **Repulsion.** Crises arrive in the form of unsolicited delivery boys trotting down the corridor with $30 deli and chinese food orders, and a Pierre Clementi-type lurking in the shadows day and night. The heroine would probably like to make it with him, or at least entertains the idea of being raped. But crotch grabbing, or alternatively ball kicking, is not the stuff that this girl's fantasies are made of. Instead it is all refined down to vague suggestion, with the intruder pirouetting in and out of mirrors while the girl soaks in Badedas. I object to the use of this stereotype, particularly by a woman director. After all, it has long since been accepted that women can and do have as many hot, panting daydreams as men.

The film's cloying naivety is carried further in a montage of Trinke-like puppets floating into frame at key moments, and a non-stop, canned social commentary (from a radio in the heroine's apartment) droning on about Earth Day, Panther rallies and the Manson trials. The quick closeups of Miss Sperling's face which provide the finale look like a cheap steal from that marvellous audition sequence in Milos Forman's **Taking Off**.

Karen Sperling obviously hasn't inherited her family's shrewd knack for making money. Since **Make A Face** couldn't hold the bulk of a pre-festival press audience for its 80 minutes, I doubt that it has much chance at the box office.

Arlene Gould

"BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR"
"BEST DIRECTOR: STANLEY KUBRICK" . . .
N.Y. FILM CRITICS

Being the adventures of a young man whose principal interests are rape, ultra-violence and Beethoven.

STANLEY KUBRICK'S

CLOCKWORK ORANGE

A Stanley Kubrick Production "A CLOCKWORK ORANGE" Starring Malcolm McDowell • Patrick Magee • Adrienne Corri and Miriam Karlin • Screenplay by Stanley Kubrick • Based on the novel by Anthony Burgess • Produced and Directed by Stanley Kubrick • Executive Producers Max L. Raab and Si Litvinoff • From Warner Bros. A Kinney Company

THREE LIVES

Produced by Impact Films, 1971. 70 min. Directed by Louva Irvine, Susan Kleckner, Robin Mide. Cast: Mallory Millet-Jones, Lillian Shreve, Robin Mide.

Three Lives is not the kind of film one might expect from Kate Millett. It is not about the assertions, the need for, or the effects of Women's Liberation (the movement itself is mentioned only once); rather it is about three very different women. The film comprises three sections, each containing edited footage of a woman in medium shot or close-up, talking about herself to the camera and sometimes to the crew behind it. Their surroundings are rather non-descript: Mallory sits in her loft either on a bed or chair with only a tie-dyed curtain adding any sense of individual place; Lillian sits on a dock on the ocean surrounded by three young women (one of them her daughter, who did the sound on the film); and Robin sits or moves about in various improvised and sparse "stage settings".

These settings give no clues to the identity of these women. We don't know what kind of environment they have created for themselves, what kind of objects they own (except for Robin, who carries everything she owns with her in three suitcases), how they interact

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with their families and friends, or what any day in their lives is like. What we do get is a sense of how they feel about themselves from the terms in which they describe themselves.

Mallory's section opens with her description of the fears she had about leaving her husband and being the sole support of herself and her child, and closes with an adamant assertion that women don't have to depend on men to survive and to create a happy existence for themselves. Of the three, Mallory perhaps most resembles women involved in the Women's Liberation movement. Essentially what she describes is the awakening of her consciousness and the struggle for independence that followed. One of the most provocative and memorable images in the film is verbalized by Mallory when she tells of having found herself married and a mother, living in a style of luxury that many would envy, yet wringing her hands in despair. She recalls the same gesture in her mother. It's a gesture that symbolizes the anxiety and distress caused by being in a position of always waiting upon another person and of always trying to please, of being afraid of making a decision, or of imposing one's desires on anyone else, or of just getting angry. With the understanding of the meaning of this telling gesture, consciousness-raising can begin.

Lillian, an appealing, athletic-looking, middle-aged woman, expresses contentment with her life, which includes a long constant marriage and at least one child. Unlike Mallory, she reveals very little sense of struggle or conflict and yet she keeps giving us disturbing information about her life: 21 miserable years spent with an authoritarian father that she would rather forget, and her husband's nervous breakdown. This part of the film is the most frustrating because either she isn't able to talk more deeply about herself (she says at the beginning that she isn't a very analytical person unless pushed to it) or else she was filmed and edited in such a way that we are deprived of some of her. What is so essential for Shirley Clarke's **Portrait of Jason** and the films of Andy Warhol is just this quality lacking in Millett's film; the sense of the camera having been simply placed in front of someone. By choosing not to follow the Warhol/Clarke aesthetic in the making of **Three Lives**, Millett has created a kind of credibility gap between what we as viewers think we might be able to ascertain from Lillian and what the filmmaker has allowed us to see. In this particular section, one is almost forced to entertain the *possibility* that the most revealing hesitations, pauses, and reflections or the lack of such have been cut out.

Robin's section suffers less from this because she is psychologically and professionally an actress and story-teller and we feel that she is going to give us an entertaining performance no matter what. She is a hardy soul who experienced exploitative sexual initiation while working in summer stock at the age of 15, left home with no money at 17, and went through the Lower East Side drug and hippie scene. She is resentful and critical of society but is very skeptical of any organized movement for social change, including the Women's movement which she sees as utopian. However, we see another side of her when she is pressed by someone off-camera to express her feelings about being a lesbian. At this point she becomes very angry and defensive and we sense that all is not well. Robin, like so many women, feels isolated, confused and angry.

None of the women (except Mallory to a certain degree) have rigorously analyzed themselves, the society in which they live, or their relationship to that society. The film is a very special kind of open-ended, nondidactic documentary; it is a political statement in so far as it is a film about women made by women, but it doesn't suggest any particular theory, line or model for liberation. Basically what the film offers is women talking about themselves, which is a start.

Melinda Ward

BACK STREET (reconsidered)

Universal Release. Produced by Carl Laemmle, Jr., 1932. 93 min. Directed by John M. Stahl. Photography: Karl Freund. Screenplay: Gladys Lehman, from the novel by Fannie Hurst. Dialogue: Lynn Starling. Art Direction: Charles D. Hall. Editor: Milton Carruth. Costumes: Vera. Cast: Irene Dunne, John Boles, George Meeker, June Clyde, Walter Catlett, Paul Weigel, Jane Darwell, Doris Lloyd, William Bakewell, Zazu Pitts.

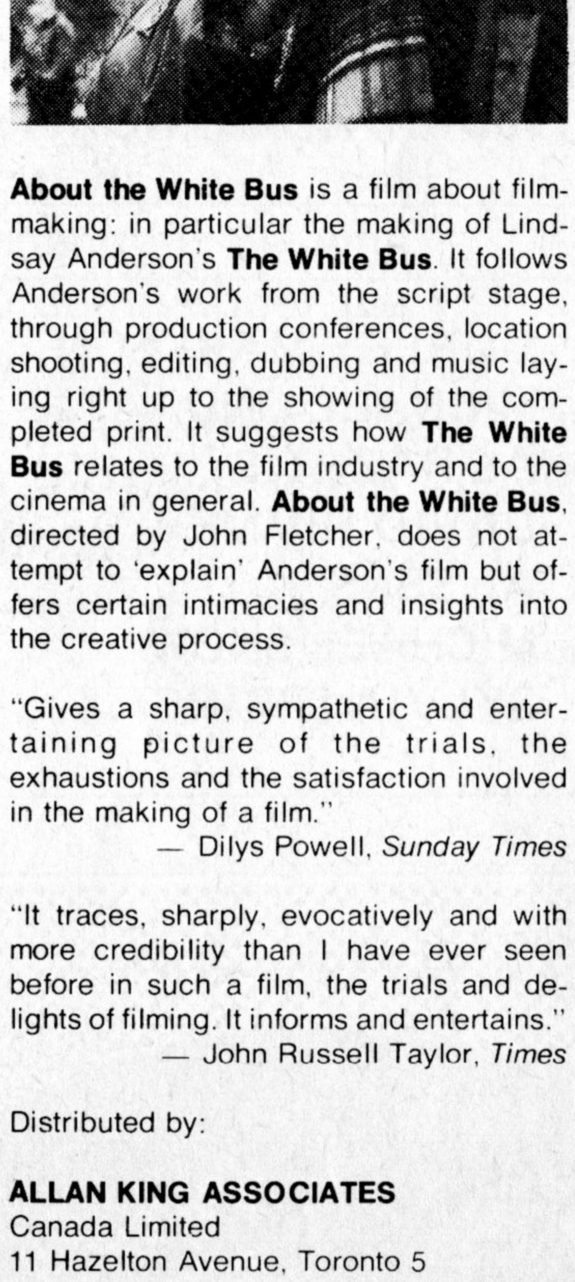
In 1970 the Film Festival of New York presented a work mentioned in all the histories of the cinema but long considered lost: the first version of **Back Street**, directed by John M. Stahl in 1932 with Irene Dunne in the main role. This 'love story' is one of the numerous screen-adaptations of Fannie Hurst and among the most popular. It was to form the subject of two remakes: one by Robert Stevenson in 1941 (with Margaret Sullavan) and the other by David Miller in 1961 (with Susan Hayward). All three films were Universal productions.

Let us give a brief outline of the plot. The film begins in the social setting of the German immigrants in Cincinnati around 1900. Young and pretty Ray Schmidt (Irene Dunne) falls in love with the young and handsome Walter Saxel (John Boles). Unfortunately, Walter is engaged to be married. The situation is not hopeless. They arrange a meeting where Walter's mother is also to be present, the idea being for Ray to produce the best impression she can. Ray is late for the rendezvous and it is not until years later, in Wall Street, that she meets Walter, now married and a father. Their romance starts again. Walter sets up an apartment for Ray, then leaves her when he is called to Europe for lengthy business matters. The film ends in 1932. Ray now follows Walter like a shadow on all his voyages, to the great annoyance of his children. We see the death of Walter, and that of Ray which follows soon after.

Back Street conveniently underlines the social implications of the melodrama. It is important to remember that the melodrama came into being in the context of the revolutionary upheaval at the end of the 18th century. It is originally an artistic expression of the transition from an aristocratic society to the bourgeois society of the 19th century. *Two Orphan Girls* on which Griffith based his famous **Orphans of the Storm** (1922) is an excellent example of what is meant here.

Jean-Loup Bourget teaches in the French department at the University of Toronto. A French version of his review of **Back Street** *appeared in the July-August, 1971 of* Positif.

ABOUT THE WHITE BUS



About the White Bus is a film about filmmaking: in particular the making of Lindsay Anderson's **The White Bus**. It follows Anderson's work from the script stage, through production conferences, location shooting, editing, dubbing and music laying right up to the showing of the completed print. It suggests how **The White Bus** relates to the film industry and to the cinema in general. **About the White Bus**, directed by John Fletcher, does not attempt to 'explain' Anderson's film but offers certain intimacies and insights into the creative process.

"Gives a sharp, sympathetic and entertaining picture of the trials, the exhaustions and the satisfaction involved in the making of a film."
— Dilys Powell, *Sunday Times*

"It traces, sharply, evocatively and with more credibility than I have ever seen before in such a film, the trials and delights of filming. It informs and entertains."
— John Russell Taylor, *Times*

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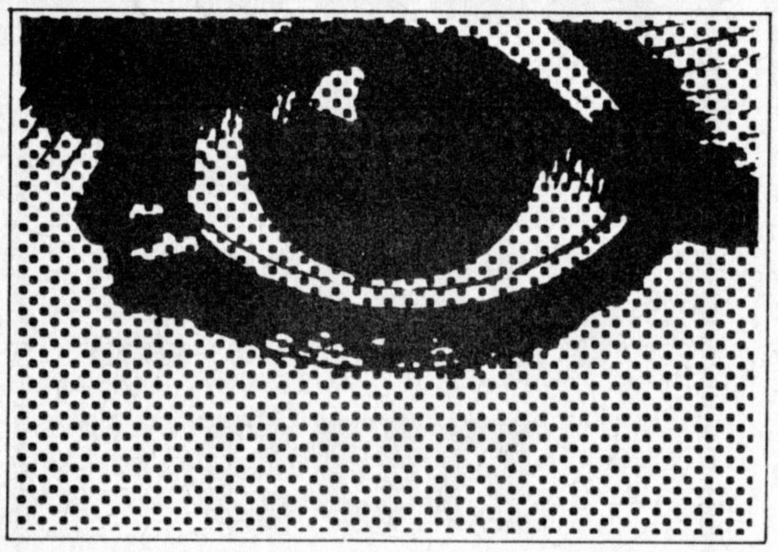

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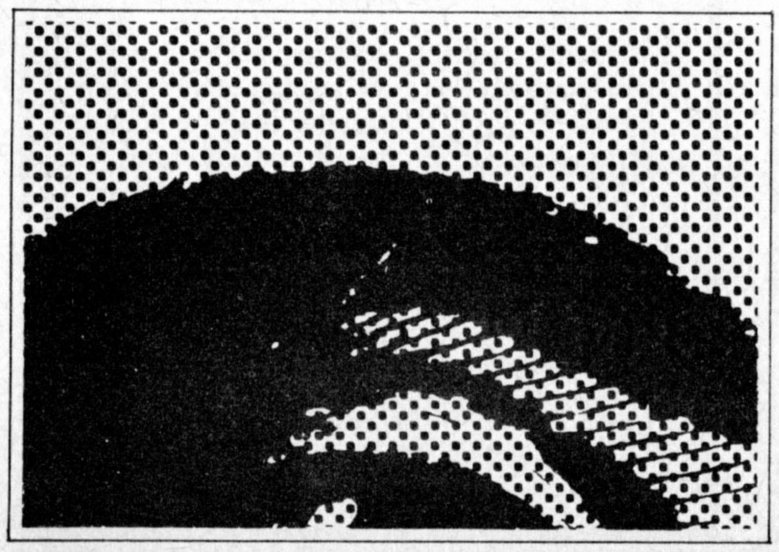

One might also mention *Scaramouche*, typically melodramatic in content (an aspect much played down by Sidney in his adaptation), or **Anthony Adverse** directed by Mervyn Le Roy in 1936 and in which the element of the socio-historical parable is, on the contrary, given violent emphasis.

Other directors of melodrama choose for their setting the same bourgeois society, but in this case a triumphant version, 19th century Europe for example (Cukor in his **Camille,** 1937), or its continuation in America at the beginning of this century (Stahl in his **Back Street**). In all these films the melodrama expresses the victim's point of view. In the case of the last two, the victim is a woman (although the respective situations differ) — a woman who is sacrificed, but who seems to consent to this sacrifice.

As it happens, the main feature of bourgeois society is the distinction which it establishes between the public and the private man. It is this distinction which we today call 'hypocrisy'. But here we are judging from the outside. It is more important to recognize that, seen from within, the bourgeois distinction between what is public and what is private is backed by a double system of morality, one which implies a dialectic of the citizen and the individual, the open and the concealed, convention and emotion. The existence of a double morality of this kind has been demonstrated by the analyses of historians such as Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism.* Scandal is one example of the system's breaking down, when what is private becomes public. It is curious that Stahl should have made a film of Parnell's life in 1937.

In the light of this social morality, it becomes clear that the 'hand of fate', anti-providence, which prevents Ray from keeping the rendez-vous which was to change her 'destiny' is in no way due to chance. It is justified by the profound logic of the social situation. In a society where marriage is a public affair and love a private matter, the initial separation of lovers is not accidental, but on the contrary, *normal.* In this sense, the sudden reversal of fortune which appears to explain Ray's delay (she sacrifices herself for her sister who is in despair at the departure of the man she loves) is of no real consequence. It is however interesting for its implicit irony (by saving her sister's love affair, Ray loses her own love) and because it presents Ray's apparent responsibility, in fact, her fundamental irresponsibility for her own fate: woman, the eternal victim of society, has no choice but to agree to the sacrifice of herself.

In the same way, it is 'normal', that is to say, consistent with the code of the society we have described, that Walter should never feel guilty for being unfaithful to his wife. To our eyes, Walter behaves in a despicable way towards both wife and mistress, deceiving one with the other. According to his own bourgeois reasoning however, he is faithful to the two women. Ray, for example, wishes to have his child, but Walter, who has two children by his marriage, in compliance with the code's emphasis on 'propriety' and 'property', refuses absolutely to grant her wish. He recoils from the possibility of scandal, unable to transgress the social code. Were such a transgression to take place, we would be faced with another potential figure of the melodrama, the bastard, hero-victim of **Anthony Adverse** quoted above.

John Boles has been accused of lacking in flamboyance; in fact it is Stahl who is bent on showing us Walter as he is, a double personality, who, as an individual, wins our sympathy, and, as a respectable member of society, arouses our contempt. Irene Dunne, for her part, can only *wait* for Walter, and it is the state of waiting which is expressed by the archetypal image of the 'woman at the window'. As for the wife, she belongs to the public and the private codes simultaneously. A lawful wife, she also moves in the private domestic sphere. The difference then between her situation and that of the mistress is merely one of degree. Ray is more of a wife than the actual wife, she is Walter's shadow, as his wife is, but more so again. She is, as it were, **Madame X.**

It is a love which must remain in the shadow to be tolerated. Ray and Walter's first kiss is lit by a pair of headlights and is thus made illicit, in keeping with the title. The 'love-nest' is simply a cage, as is indicated by that emblem of Ray, the caged bird in her room.

Stahl's muted style in this film has been criticized, unfavourable comparisons being made with later works such as the very Sirkian **Leave Her to Heaven** (1945). It should be remembered that the director's style corresponds to Ray's point of view, which is one of resignation and the acceptance of this double morality. Conversely, the expressionism, the baroque quality of **Leave Her to Heaven** are the correlative of Gene Tierney's 'scandalous' revolt.

The sole compensations, the unique moments of escape, occur at the beginning and at the end of the film. The opening shows us Ray and Walter temporarily free of all social ties and they seize this opportunity to be individuals. It is the precarious paradisical state before 'prohibition', before the repressive system of laws, of whatever nature, comes into force. It is a semi-European world, thus a nostalgic one for Americans, where, in the bier-garten 'Over the Rhine' the beer flows and the music invites to dance. At the close of the film a sequence in the past conditional shows us what would have happened, had Ray not failed to show up at the rendez-vous. The lovers can be united only in an after-life, whether it be an artistic one (the lying flashback) or religious (Ray's death is accompanied by the ringing of bells, the triumph of light being finally sanctioned). An afterlife alone can reconcile the dualism of the social mores.

Back Street then, is, by implication, a social and feminist melodrama which reveals the workings of a double bourgeois morality and clarifies the contradictions which this double morality in its own way resolves. A literary equivalent may come to mind, George Sand's *Indiana* for example. In both cases we are dealing with melodrama at its least escapist, indicating as it does that the 'happy' ending is nothing but a dream. Traditional criticism rejects the melodrama, attacking it on grounds of sentimentality and lack of verisimilitude. In reality, **Back Street,** by showing us the mistress as the archetype of the wife, and by emphasizing that Ray's situation is the rule rather than the exception ('as it happens,' her neighbour is also a 'kept woman') tells us an exemplary story.

Jean-Loup Bourget

OVER- & -looked UNDER- -RATED

Student Nurses. dir. Stephanie Rothman. In a fairly normal omnibus movie, one of the four nurses gets involved with a Chicano revolutionary who kills a cop. After some soul-searching, she arrives at graduation in fatigues, with a revolver, and one of her friends remarks that things sure have changed. The last line of the movie is her reply: "You bet your ass, baby".

The Velvet Vampire. dir. Stephanie Rothman. A socially, politically, and cinematically multi-layered movie, in which the psychological and sexual implications of vampire movies are explored by extending reality. The polymorphous perverse vampire lady, who looks straight out of **Beyond the Valley of the Dolls,** finally gets done in by Jesus freaks.

Kay Armatage

Danish Letter

Vibeke Pedersen

Defining 'women's films' is just as difficult as defining fields of study like Third World cinema or Workers' cinema. When the production of films by such exploited groups is still embryonic, it is difficult to see its importance, for usually such films are not especially new or revolutionary in form, because of the still existing norms of the ruling class. Definitions make no sense before these groups have developed a class consciousness. Therefore there is no reason why one should deal with all films made by women, and there was no sense in presenting at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival this year a program with the title Women Filmmakers, which consisted of films of all kinds which had only one thing in common: that they were made by women.

But to argue that films on women should be made by women is as obvious as the fact the Women's Liberation Movement is only for women. This, of course, does not exclude the importance of male directors also dealing with the problems of sexism in our society.

The first film of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLF) was made in April 1971 in a textile factory in Troyes, which had been occupied by the women workers for sixteen days. The film, or until now the filmed interview, was photographed outside the factory, because the French communist trade union CGT would not allow the film-group to go into the factory.

The film is an hour-long interview with a group of women who had taken part in the occupation. It is a report of this specific strike, on the role that was played by CGT in ending the strike, but mostly on what happened when the women were together for sixteen days during the occupation. The experiences they talk about, of sister-solidarity, of the pleasure of realizing that women are human beings too, are experiences common to all women, and so the report is universal. This interview can function as an introduction everywhere — it has been shown in factories and in schools (with a lot of trouble of course) — to a discussion of women's problems.

In Denmark there are five films on women in the works. Four of them are produced by a workshop financed by Danish Radio and the Danish Film Foundation. The fifth is a more professional production, produced and photographed by the husband of one of the women. She directs and performs in the film. Of course, the fact that it is a man who produces and photographs a film on women doesn't automatically make the film bad, but it is typical that the man takes care of money and technical problems. Women must get to know all the phases of film production, and not hand the technical parts over to men.

The other films from the Workshop are **The Danish Housewife, The Sleeping Beauty**, and a short film made for the Redstocking exhibition in the Paris bienniale. The Redstocking exhibition was not carried out,

Vibeke Pedersen is currently editing a women's section for a Danish film magazine, and writes regularly about Third World film for Take One.

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probably because of the women's feelings of the absurdity of participating in as traditional and bourgeois an arrangement as an art exhibition. The filmgroup also made a film on female roles, which isn't yet finished.

The Danish Housewife is a rather traditional film, based on the contradictions between the myth of the housewife's happy days as shown in "women's magazines", and the grey reality, effectively underlined by an interview with the Minister of Labour, who talks about "women's natural needs". The film was not quite finished when I saw it, but it seemed no more than simply critical—I mean that it was not strategic, pointing in no new directions.

The Danish Housewife was not made exclusively by women, and it may be for that reason that it doesn't go as far as **The Sleeping Beauty** or **Three Girls and a Pig**. In this film, three women pass through different female roles, while remaining in the same room throughout the film, in a frame of mysticism and romanticism. During the first and third parts of the films the women are occupied with making garlic wreaths to protect themselves from Dracula, the bloodsucker, whom we never see, but who is standing behind the camera, and on screen is personified by the pig that is castrated. They act out small sketches, sing songs and read stories about frustrated women, women as losers. In the second part of the film, the women play the active female roles: they are no longer ethereal, suffering, and romantic, but now lecherous, vampish, and swaggering. They are peeling potatoes instead of making garlic wreaths. They have become soldiers, but are "still doing potatoes for the men". At the end of this part they castrate the pig, an act that can be seen as an effort to disarm the man, but also as a demystification of the myth of the feminist as castrator.

The Sleeping Beauty deals with female roles too, but in a more strategic manner. Again it is difficult to distinguish between the critical and the strategic, because to realize where you are is already to take a step forward. The film consists of nine pictures, mostly with no plot and very little movement, and has a non-syncronic sound-track of interviews with different women, mostly on sexuality and relations with men. The film tries to get through to woman's identity — what it may be is not yet quite clear—but here we have some pictures, to which we can relate our unarticulated feelings.

Neither film is an explicit analysis of the oppression of women, but both give you some elements for the construction of a new consciousness.

Eine Pramie Fur Irene, a German fiction film by Helke Sanders, deals with Irene, an unmarried factory worker with two children. The film shows Irene in three different contexts. The first is in the factory where the women have to do the worst and lowest paid work. Irene is fighting to heighten the consciousness of the women. She turns their unarticulated, half-joking attacks on their employers into a concrete analysis of mechanisms of oppression, and the women begin to react: they destroy a camera, which supervises them all the time. We next see Irene in her spare time outside the home, and here the oppression has turned from economic to psychological. Irene goes into a bar alone, but is insulted because the men cannot forgive her for rejecting their advances. She walks alone in the street, though she is afraid of being assaulted.

But Irene feels the social oppression most in her relationship to her children. She is forced by society to oppress her children (eg. the poor condition of the new housing development where she lives) and by oppressing her children she is oppressing herself.

This film was shown on the same program as **The Woman's Film**. These two films are fundamentally different. **The Woman's Film** had a much stronger immediate impact than **Irene**, perhaps because **The Woman's Film** is based on documentary material, whereas **Irene** is fictional, of a type characteristic of German political cinema just now: the *Verfremdungstile*, whose argument is rational, rather than emotional. But to characterize **The Woman's Film** as a film using only emotional arguments is not quite fair—the montage of stories of consciousness raising among all these women is an analytical work that is just as good as **Irene**. The effectiveness of the two different kinds of political film must be judged on the basis of political experience gained through working with the films.

Another German director who deals with Women's Liberation is Claudia Alemann from Frankfurt. As well as her own film, **Tu Luc Van Doan**, she is starting to distribute other women's films. **Tu Luc Van Doan** is about women's situation in the Vietnam War. The film tells about the double oppression of women during the time of colonialism, when they were at the same time oppressed by the French and by their own husbands, and about how women, slowly and often with many difficulties, are now struggling for their right to fight side by side with men.

Before I talk about our own experiences with filmmaking in the women's summer camp, I'll tell you a little about the camp itself. This was a camp only for women, and for all kinds of women: with or without children, students, workers, housewives, redstockings. The aim of the camp was to get women to talk together and to learn that it isn't boring or in other ways unbearable to be with no one but women. After staying there a long time, one got a feeling of having gone through women's specific problems to problems of a general kind, and we felt that the camp was a gathering of human beings. When there were no men to define us as women, we just felt like 'ordinary' people.

Now back to filmmaking. It was an experience that convinced me that we *have* new areas and new ideas to develop. A concrete example is a TV program we made about the camp. The producer wanted an interview with a group or a discussion among women who had different opinions about the camp. But this way of talking reminded us too much of what we had been trying to avoid in the camp: the objective interviewer who comes from the outside, or the fruitless confrontation of opinions that a discussion often becomes. So we decided to copy the meeting form of the camp, the "chatter-meeting". The group did not consist of especially selected women, or of women who differed much in opinion; they were just average. Instead of trying to convince people through

verbal argument, we wanted to demonstrate that women are able to talk together, and we hope that we were showing a mode of being together that is not aggressive, not characterized by power struggles, etc. We were told that it was the first time that eight people had talked together on TV without a chairman!

We made another film at the camp, and learned several things: that it is difficult to make a film about something in which you are very much involved yourself, because you feel like an observer and experience things in quite a different way when you are looking at things through a lens, or attending a meeting with a tape recorder. It was so tiring that one person couldn't do it alone, but had to give the apparatus to someone else, which was also good because then more people learned to use it. But on the other hand it was necessary that a film about the camp be made by women who were involved themselves. There was a feeling in the camp, and in the movement in general, against the intrusion of the agents of the media, against being recorded on film and tape, etc., because the media are usually manipulated for profit by others, rather than used by ourselves for propaganda purposes.

Because of this dislike of being watched, and our own dislike of watching, we made most of the film as constructed talks by groups discussing women's problems and problems in the camp. We started by making ordinary interviews in the traditional style, but soon we felt that it is very difficult and disagreeable to be an interviewer, if that means keeping yourself and your opinions outside the discussion. So we gave that up, and the interviewer became a person as well as the interviewed, and then it turned into talks, where one of the persons involved took care of the tape recorder. The only one who had to stay at her place was the photographer, and there was nothing we could do about that.

LETTER FROM N.Y.C.

The Women's Video Collective is a group of eight women who have been working together for nine months as a consciousness-raising group and as a collective using 1/2" videotape, We range in age from 17 to 35 (although our 17-year-old just started college in another city, and she comes infrequently now). Seven women are married, and one is married with children. Most of us work actively in film or television.

As a consciousness-raising group we meet once a week for an evening to talk with each other without the videotape. Our group has become strong and unified, and on an individual basis it's been important in all the ways that a consciousness-raising group can be.

But we also use the videotape equipment. On an ongoing basis we videotape other consciousness-raising groups in an effort to help a group see itself more clearly. Often the group will view its own tape in the company of another women's group, and without fail, the exchanges between the two groups, prompted by the tapes, have been valuable to everyone involved.

We also have begun to produce two half-hour programs per month for the public access cable television stations in New York City. We have aired one tape on a woman artist named May Wilson, a remarkable woman that Amalie Rothschilde made a film about two years ago. On Friday [late November, 1971] we tape an hour discussion between a gynecologist, a women's health expert, and 15 women, talking very frankly about our bodies and gynecological needs. As part of the program we'll tape a full gynecological examination, and this should be aired on cable television next week. Next month we'll produce two programs with feminist psychiatrist/psychologists on the subject of our mental health.

Women's Video Collective, 23 W. 9th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

Lee Ferguson

REFLEC--TIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by HERMAN G. WEINBERG

The rarest of the *rara avis* is the woman film director. Four come immediately to mind, of course—Olga Preobrezhenskaya in the USSR (**The Peasant Women of Riazan**), Jacqueline Audrey and Nicole Vedrès in France (the former for her Colette films, the latter for her documentaries, **Paris 1900, Life Begins Tomorrow,** etc.), and Leontine Sagan in pre-Hitler Germany for her **Maedchen in Uniform.** I cannot think of another in their class—until I think of Nelly Kaplan, currently working in France, erstwhile protégé of Abel Gance and now launched on her own as writer-director of her own films. After an apprenticeship working with Gance on his triple-screen Polyvision and as second unit director on his last several films, she embarked on a series of documentaries on the painters Gustave Moreau, André Masson, Picasso and finally broke through with her first "fictional" feature—**La Fiancée du Pirate** (released here as **A Very Curious Girl**), a strong virile work, an incisive study in hypocrisy of which Picasso felt impelled to say, "This is insolence raised to the status of a fine art."

"Isolence is good for the skin," echoes Mlle. Kaplan, a strikingly attractive blonde. "It's stronger than I am. Since the age of six I've been raising hell. They told me not to rock the boat but I can't help confronting tabus. Insolence is good for the skin!" (From

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been US correspondent for Sight & Sound *as well as* Cahiers du Cinéma, *and published several books on the cinema.*

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a recent interview in *Le Monde*.) "I like those who, having been humiliated and offended, revolt against their tormenters. I don't hold with offering the other cheek. My new film, **Le Collier de Ptyx**, is also my own revolt against stupidity, tabus, prejudices, moralists and pre-judgments. Above all, stupidity is the most static of them all. If you're nailed to one place, you're dead." **Le Collier de Ptyx** is an imaginary adventure, an excursion into the fantastic, for which her hero should appear to be "a specialist in Mallarmé and have the stamina of Tarzan," and for which role she would have liked to engage the "pope of the surrealists"—André Breton. Surrealism is one of her pet "things", another being cartoon films. "I adore their gay ferocity, their 'nonsense': a man who is flattened by a three-ton steam roller only to snap back into his rounded self again. Nothing is more ironic. Ferocity is good for the skin!"

Nelly, being pretty enough not to need cosmetics, parodies the cosmetic ads with her own treatments, the spiritual virtues that are "good for the skin."

In her previous film, a farce, **Papa, les petits bateaux**, kidnapping the ravishing heiress, Venus de Palma, seems like a good idea. But Venus's angelic features conceal considerable intelligence and a tempestuous temperament. The gang of would-be kidnappers learn this to their cost as they try to carry out "the job that can't go wrong." In a way, this is a fable, too. All her films are fables, she says. They're all allegories and they all point morals. But, as she said of her latest work, **Le Collier de Ptyx** (what *is* "Ptyx"??), she doesn't take the easy way out with fables and the fantastic, surrealism or no surrealism. "I had a difficult time writing it," she says, "because it was necessary that everything that happens in it should be logical within the framework of the fantastic. It was like walking a tight-rope."

In that respect, in that respect for logic, she is in a great French tradition. Having a wry attitude towards the human condition, she quotes from Breton's *Anthology of Black Humor* a citation from Lichtenberg to which she subscribes:

"Humor is the highest revolt of the spirit."

Not since the florescence of the *nouvelle vague* in France has so promising a fresh new talent for "le film juste" appeared on the horizon.

Nelly Kaplan

BOOKS

Superstar, by Viva. Lancer Publications, New Jersey. Distributed in Canada by Curtis Distributing Co. Paper. $1.25.

There is a very old and critically accepted tradition of the fictionalized autobiography. This genre includes such great works as Dickens' "David Copperfield," Joyce's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," and Proust's "Remembrance of Things Past". There is another equally old and accepted tradition of the roman à clef: Huxley's "Point Counter Point" is a good example. These novels are usually about specific persons, are sometimes satirical but pretty accurate, with the names and some characteristics changed.

Then there's the new tradition of the popular roman à clef. This is based quite closely on some famous person's life, but laced with sensational passages which may or may not be true. These are legion: Harold Robbins' and Jacqueline Susann's collected works, Henry Sutton's "The Exhibitionist," and others, only the titles of which I can remember, like "The King," and "The Voyeur". (In the cinema, **Citizen Kane** falls into this category).

And now Viva's "**Superstar**," a nice combination of these forms. She calls it a novel, and warns at the start: "This is a novel, a work of the imagination. All characters portrayed in it are fictitious." Such a disclaimer is de rigueur for this form. There's a character called A, an avant-garde artist and filmmaker who discovers Gloria, names her, and makes her a superstar; he gets shot by a crazy woman, does all his work in a studio called The Plant, is surrounded by homosexuals, and so on. Half-way through the book, Gloria describes her French boyfriend building a shrine: "First, he put down an Andy Warhol book of photographs and on top of that some photographs of John Lennon . . . ." This is a trick, also de rigueur for this form, to throw you off. In "Valley of the Dolls," the character who's like a combination of Ethel Merman and Judy Garland is compared to each of them. Clever. In Viva's novel there's another variation. Gloria is talking on the phone to Jean la Fonce, a Hollywood actress married to a French film director named Robert:

J. How's Angelo?

G. He's um . . . sitting right here on the bed, cutting out polaroids . . . . We just took some speed . . . . We're writing a book.

J. You are?

G. Yeah!

J. Oh, God . . . . Well, what is it about?

G. Well, it's all about sex, of course.

J. God, you're going to turn into a Henry Sutton!

G. Who's he?

J. The guy that wrote "The Exhibitionist" . . . . I think you'd write a fantastic book actually.

"The Exhibitionist" is a novel supposedly based on Jane Fonda, a Hollywood actress who used to be married to a French film director . . .

Besides sex, "**Superstar**" is about Gloria's childhood in a rigidly Catholic family with a constipated father and a mother who was an active member of The Lunatic Fringe. Gloria has several nervous breakdowns, characterized by fairly standard verbal, sexual, and religious obsessions, and finally she makes it to New York, still a virgin at 22, where she learns to shit and meets A. Then the novel gets down to sex: men, women, speed, vibrators, cucumbers with cold cream, and I can't remember what else. I guess we all find that sort of thing pretty interesting.

But this isn't just an exploitation book, although I'm not sure that Viva wouldn't resent my saying that. Its form is a combination of memoir-style narrative, taped conversations, acid dreams, neurotic fantasies, scenarios, newsreels, headlines, quotations from newspapers, and straight objective narrative. She switches freely from section to section, often changing type-face to indicate changes in time or mood. Gloria and her husband film and tape all the events in their lives, just as Andy Warhol does: hence the taped conversations. Andy Warhol knows how fascinating taped conversations are: documentary, total detail, fidelity. In regular novels, conversations have to be made up, and they're never the same. Henry James worked all his life to freeze conversations, to capture exactly all the little swirls, meanderings, and repetitions. I bet he would have loved to have a tape-recorder. "**Superstar**" may not be the fulfillment of the potential of this method (neither is "The Anderson Tapes," a simulation), but Viva is onto a terrific way to write a novel. If Allan King can make a fiction film out of real people (**The Married Couple**), why can't Viva make a novel the same way?

Besides, it's funny, and very informative. There are also some nice comments about women's liberation (including a headline, "men are such cunts") and, as the jacket blurb says, "sensational experiences with the great and the near great". It's not a great novel, and Viva's not a genius, but she's working with good clean form in a sensational genre, which makes pretty good reading. You can finish it in one night too.

Kay Armatage

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FOREIGN/ART

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THE CLOWNS Fellini's best since 8 1/2. — Newsday

8 1/2 "Fellini's best before Clowns."

KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE "Not all girls are raving bloody Lesbians, you know" yelled Miss York. "That", sighed Miss Reid, "is a misfortune I'm well aware of."

MILKY WAY "If you have seen Bunuel's work before, you know. If you haven't, it's about time you found out. . . . Nothing short of perfection!" — Bernard Drew, Garrett News Service

TRISTANA Starring Catherine Deneuve and Franco Nero. Written and directed by Luis Bunuel.

FIRST LOVE Winner, San Sebastian Film Festival, 1970; directed and starring Maximilian Schell. "A visionary concentration on the glories and the pain of human desire rendered incredibly sensual by the presence of Dominique Sanda." — N.Y. Times

THE DREAMER Official Entry of Israel, 1970 Cannes Film Festival. Also from Israel: Margo, Lupo, Sallah.

LADY OF MONZA 1608. Within the walls of the convent of Monza, our Sister Virginia was violated . . . she fell in love like any other woman. The story was just recently revealed by the courageous Archbishop of Milan, now Pope Paul VI. The film, directed by Visconti, stars Anne Heywood and Hardy Kruger.

HELL IN THE PACIFIC Lee Marvin said of Toshiro Mifune: "He dives into things with such complete abandonment that it shocks the Occidental audience; but just when he really gets going, he's nagged by self-doubt; that's what makes him great. Personally, of course, he's like me — a dummy . . ." John Boorman directs Marvin and Mifune.

MISCELLANEOUS

THE SKY ABOVE/THE MUD BELOW, DARLING, THE LAST VALLEY, CLOSELY WATCHED TRAINS, THE LAST MERCENARY, THIS SPORTING LIFE, THE GRISSOM GANG, LORD OF THE FLIES, MIDAS RUN, THE ORGANIZER, A MINUTE TO PRAY/A SECOND TO DIE, THE TENTH VICTIM, SHALAKO, THE PRODUCERS, A BULLET FOR SANDOVAL, A TASTE OF HONEY, TILL DEATH US DO PART, DAVID AND LISA, TOO LATE THE HERO, ROOM AT THE TOP, GLEN AND RANDA, DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE, JENNY, THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG, ROBBERY, LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE RUNNER, FOR LOVE OF IVY, THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMEDY.

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